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PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT WITH THEIR CHILDREN
AS A FUNCTION OF PARTICIPATION
IN A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

BY



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Parents' Involvement With Their Children as a Function of Participation in a Preschool Program" submitted by W. Peter Palmer in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

This investigation attempted to measure the influence of preschool education programs on parent involvement in the home. Parent involvement was studied in terms of parents' activities directed toward participation with their children and management of their own lives.

The Preschool Demonstration Project including the Edmonton Readiness Centre provided the ground research from which the present study extends. The families involved were randomly selected from a specified area in the city of Edmonton and met certain criteria.

Assessments of parent involvement were made before and after their child's preschool experience and a year later by means of an interview-questionnaire.

The information collected from parents' was structured around twelve environmental variables considered pertinent to parent involvement. These dimensions dealt with the variety of interactions parents have with their children, the kinds of choices parents are willing to allow children, and the ways in which parents proportion their leisure time. Parents' responses were assessed by means of a three point rating scale and converted to percentages in order to compare the variation within and between groups over time.

The findings did not clearly illustrate the relationships between the treatment groups and the above dimensions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

This study was an attempt to measure certain changes in parents' involvement in the home as a function of their child's participation in a preschool program. Parent involvement is seen as an important dimension in the exchange between the child and his environment and as such plays a part in determining how much the child learns or does not learn during his early years. As a global concept involvement was expressed in terms of dependent variables, such as,

- (a) parents' interest in their own personal enhancement through such things as reading, excursions into the community, and proportioning their time to include leisure activities;
- (b) the number and variety of interactions parents have with their children; and
- (c) parents' willingness to allow their children some say in establishing rules for themselves.

The Preschool Demonstration Project, a study of the effects of certain preschool experiences on later school success, provided the ground research from which this study extends (Bishop, J. K., 1970). This project began in 1965 and involved a number of community agencies in Edmonton under the co-ordination of the University of Alberta. In

dealing with the question of what early experiences are important for children, two preschool classes and a home control group were organized. One class provided a readiness program which contrived to enhance children's language, development, and thinking. The second class was a play school program directed toward the general but particularly social development of the child. This study has been concerned with the influence of these preschool experiences on the parents of the children involved. These children, at age five, attended a Readiness Centre, a Play School experience or stayed Home. Assessments of parent involvement in the home were made by means of a structured interview.

The parents were interviewed in December, 1967, and June, 1968, prior to and immediately following their children's preschool experience. This study interviewed these parents again at a time when their children had completed grade I with grade II under way.

Information requested from the parents was structured around twelve variables or dimensions. These environmental indices were designed to contain information about factors in the environment defined as parental involvement or participation that are hypothesized to affect the development of behavioral characteristics in children.

The dimensions were rated on a three point scale (for example, "extensive", "limited", "lacking") and are listed here.

- I. Educational goals of parent for child
- II. Educational plans of parent for child
- III. Mother's reading and exposure to literature
- IV. Child's exposure to literature at home
- V. Mother's time for leisure activities

VI. Father's involvement with child

VII. Parental agreement on discipline

VIII. Major parental decisions about the care and
management of child

IX. Turmoil between child and siblings

X. Child's growth since the beginning of the
program

XI. Communication between parent and child

XII. Child's role in establishing rules for himself

In summary, this study attempted to describe the influence of various preschool experiences on the home environment by sampling a variety of processes and conditions in the home that were hypothesized to be related to the preschool experiences.

Theoretical and Practical Importance of the Problem

Early Intervention

Today, early intervention in the lives of children through preschool education is seen as a means of stimulating optimum development as well as a means of counteracting disadvantaged circumstances. Bloom (1964) hypothesized that since a child develops 50% of his mature intelligence by age four, interventions designed to maximize learning gains must come as early as possible. It is during the first few years of life that a child's set and patterns for learning are established and the foundations for positive mental, emotional, and social health are built. "The accumulation of data suggesting that the first few years of life are crucial for the priming of cognitive development call for vigorous and imaginative action programs for those

early years" (Caldwell, 1967). Educators realize that some children seem well prepared for school and some do not. Since preparedness seems dependent on the kinds of experiences children have prior to school, studying changes in the kinds of activities taking place in the home during the preschool years should provide clues as to factors contributing to children's success in early ventures outside the home, such as at school.

Studies Over Time

It can be argued that one of the greatest single lacks in educational research is the relative absence of long-term longitudinal studies. The most dramatic example of this is the short-term longitudinal approach to the evaluation of the Head Start programs of the 1960's designed to provide preschool experience for educationally disadvantaged children (Fox, 1969). To evaluate how much children profited from this instruction obviously required a long-term longitudinal study following the children at least through the early grades in elementary school and ideally into secondary school. Instead, the shortest possible short-term studies were completed, some comparing children at the beginning and end of a summer's instruction. It is unlikely that human growth can be understood through such narrow perspectives. Longitudinal studies of changes in parent involvement with their children have to do with continuous development over periods of time amid natural circumstances and as such can play a crucial part in clarifying the multiplicity of influences on and the continuous change of the human being.

Effects on Parents

In the Early Ventures in Learning: An Interim Report it was shown anecdotally that parents of children who participated in a preschool learning experience changed during their exposure to it (Bishop, J. K., Orlick, G., Parranto, J. F. A., 1969). Verification of such anecdotal observations seems required in order to provide information from which to plan better forms of study programs for parents. Following their involvement in the Preschool Demonstration Project parents whose children were in the Readiness program expressed their desire to learn how to vote and go on field trips, "just like" their children.

When individuals learn that life can be stretched and moulded to an extent hitherto undreamed of, their demands will spill over into other spheres of community developments (Bishop, 1969).

In preschool education the underlying opportunities to broaden and enrich family life are equally as vital as assisting parents to learn what enhances their child's development and to have a more satisfactory relationship with him.

This study may contribute to the development of an instrument to identify and measure, in terms of environmental variables, the differential aspects of early home environments. Being able to measure environments differentially along with beginning to understand the process of influencing change in home environments should lead to a more accurate identification of specific environment or environmental patterns that are most suitable for the development of different characteristics in people (Bloom, 1964).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Individual and the Family

The process of growth and development is probably most appropriately described as an unfolding or reaching out to the environment of the entire personality. Every perception and every stimulus from the environment contributes to the education of the developing individual. It is now realized that the most formative years of all are the preschool years during which a child is most closely associated with his parents.

"The factor that mediates between the large abstractions of economic and social status and the individual is the structure of family life" (Miller and Woock, 1970). In the past the usefulness of programs attempting to increase the family's skills and aspirations for providing help to their children in school have been difficult to assess. Much of the evidence for the success of several plans aimed at training parents to establish the most positive home environment for school achievement is purely anecdotal. "An unanswered question that has provoked a great deal of research is how can parents be involved in the education of their children in ways that will provide maximum impact both in terms of the child's abilities and the improvement of the effectiveness of the parent?" (Butler, 1970). The University of Vermont Family Living and Human Development project demonstrated that the way to a child's development is by exposing parents to new

materials and learnings in order that they can learn to want some of the things that could be of great worth to their families (Samenfink, 1967). Clarizio's work (1968) showed, however, that neither special presentations to small group parent meetings or individual and group counselling for parents whose children were attending a Head Start program lead to significant change at follow-up. These findings point to the importance of re-examining ways in which parents can best be influenced and provided with new learnings and suggest the need to look at the more subtle influences exerted on families by different styles of preschool programs.

Variables Related To School Success

When intelligence was believed to be fixed at birth deliberate efforts at enriching childrens' environments and experiences were seen as useless or harmful. The home was seen in terms of the emotional support it offered and not in terms of its 'hidden curriculum'. With more general acceptance of the view that a child's educational achievements depend heavily on what he learns before the age of six, "the home and not the school emerge(d) as the major educational institution in the land" (Pines, 1966).

Although pertinent literature suggests that the home produces the first and perhaps the most insistent influences on the development of the child, during recent years, the family as an educational institution has been much neglected and the role of the parent as teacher seldom discussed.

Because of the conflict in function between the school and the home:

. . . the one seeking to be a cultural leveller, the other operating inevitably as a cultural differentiator -- the discussion of the family in educational literature almost always casts the family in the role of obstacle (Grandstaff, 1969).

Perceiving the home as hopelessly conservative and obstructionist obscures the status of the family as an educational agency as precedence is given to the role of the home as a source of educational problems. Grandstaff (1969) blames the specialization of education for bringing about a situation in which parents have very little confidence in their competence as educators. This has resulted in a generalized disinclination of parents to regard themselves as educators and, instead, to cast themselves only as providers and caretakers.

The serious consequences of this thinking are seen in studies of the early reader phenomenon which indicate that mothers of children who did not read before age six felt it was the school's or the professional's job to teach reading and that lay people such as parents would damage the child's opportunities to learn to read if they pressed or interfered (Durkin in King and Kerber, 1968). When families cease to function as educational agencies, they probably lose one of their main functions and with the loss of function, one of their main sources of cohesion. "When learning is no longer an important part of the adult - child relationship in the family it is not surprising that parents and their children have difficulty 'communicating'" (Grandstaff, 1969). They have virtually nothing to communicate about.

Assessing Environmental Change

Identifying and measuring home environments with greater accuracy lies in attempts to measure parent - child relationships in the family.

Probably as significant and possibly more basic to the problem of measurement of home environments is the degree to which parents are meaningfully involved in their own personal development. Precise measurement would have to concern itself with numerous variables beyond the scope of this study. An attempt is made here to scrutinize parents' responses to questions relating to relationships with their children and their own activities.

Wolf (1964) stated that there may be a specific set of environmental processes or a unique set of forces for each individual. The home learning environment is considered in this view to be composed of a number of sub-environments. To illustrate these, one need only think of the influence of the authoritarian home or the contributions of planfulness, purposefulness and harmony in the family or the effects of an emphasis on academic and vocational aspirations and expectations.

Until recently little emphasis has been given to studies dealing with the identification and measurement of home environments, appropriate means of intervention by which learning environments can be influenced, and clarification of the relationships between environments and the human characteristics whose development they influence. Research in the past has been directed at measuring and identifying global aspects of environments such as those yielding indices of social status or economic well being. Lavin (1965) stated that socioeconomic status is capable of predicting school progress because it is a summarizing variable, "symboliz(ing) a variety of values, attitudes, and motivations related to academic performance." More recently Henderson (1970) observed that the index of socioeconomic status summarizes a good deal

more than this statement indicates and that it is precisely for this reason that the usefulness of such measures is limited. Such indices, based on static and material elements, for example, occupation, income or type of residence, are so gross that more is obscured than revealed. "They provide no guidance for the design of programs to compensate for debilitating environments or to build upon the advantages provided by facilitating environments" (Henderson, 1970).

Attempts were made to identify and measure home environments on the basis of dynamic interactive processes as early as 1929. Van Alstyne and Skodak in 1939 (both described by Wellman, 1940) began to show a trend toward examining the dynamic process characteristics of home environments being studied. These included elements such as: conversation between parent and child; encouragement for expression; and independent activity. Bloom (1964) and his students Dave (1963) and Wolf (1964) coined the term "environmental process variables" meaning the dynamic interactive characteristics of a home environment which describe what parents and children do rather than what they are.

Examining means of intervention and methods of measuring change in environmental process variables can provide inroads toward the understanding of the day to day interactions occurring in the home. This dynamic process between parents and children, largely descriptive of how parents act and react, may already be markedly influenced by the kinds of school programs their children now enter and may potentially be influenced in ways and by techniques yet undreamt. Parents may again come to see themselves as worthwhile educators and their homes as places in which there can continually occur interaction facilitative to learning.

Programs for Children and Parents

Some researchers have hypothesized that social, educational and economic poverty are learned in early childhood. Hess and Shipman (1965) have emphasized that the lack of cognitive meaning in family communication is the central factor involved. If communication and language are largely shaped by the structure of the family and language shapes thought and cognitive styles, surely "influences" on the home learning environment demand and warrant full attention. In this study such "influences" on the existent and potential "educationality" of the home are hypothesized to be at play in any preschool learning experience.

Teaching methods traditionally employed in preschools are child-centered, child-led and permissive. Helen Bradley (1969) characterizes these methods as ". . . watching and waiting for the child's needs to emerge and determining the timing of different activities . . ." In this view the child learns from experiences that involve all aspects of his life: his emotions, his relations with other children, his fantasies, his surroundings and his actions. These activities, common to play school preparation, promote social, emotional, and motor development structured by the child's expressed needs.

More recent methods in preschool education consist of carefully sequenced presentations of teacher-planned program activities to accomplish specific pre-determined educational goals such as reading, arithmetic or logical thinking. Happiness, in this view, does not come from play alone but also from intellectual accomplishment. "Readiness is considered the product of direct experiences provided by the teachers" through "a program characterized by a strong intellectual

push, often to the exclusion of consideration of social or emotional development" (Schwertfeger, 1969).

Any attempt at early childhood education obviously necessitates some degree of parental participation. With greater recognition of and appreciation for the importance of the "hidden curriculum" in the home, ways and means of stimulating parental involvement in the child's early home environment have assumed major significance. In some intervention programs parent participation is a central objective, and in others it is a peripheral or indirect consequence. A typical tactic in intervention programs has been to alter the content and processes that characterize the school classroom although there are now some programs that have attempted to affect alterations in parent behavior more directly.

Gray and Klaus (1970) have reported their research (at the end of the fourth grade) on the effects of two and three summers of preschool program intervention and weekly home visits during the remaining months with children from low-income homes. One of their most interesting findings was "the spread of effect down the family from the mother and possibly the target-age child to a younger child." Results so far indicate that most of the effect is coming from the mother. This kind of "vertical diffusion" suggests that intervention programs can have a lasting effect and go beyond the children that were the target of that intervention program.

The parent involvement component of the Tuscon Early Education Model (1970) has been designed to modify the natural environment in ways that support and supplement the instructional component that is carried

out in the classroom. Frequent positive communications to the home concerning the child's progress in school are aimed at reducing parental feelings of alienation from the school. Parents are acquainted with the objectives of the instructional program so that, for example, as parents learn that their child is asking more and different kinds of questions and that the teacher places high value on this behavior, he may begin to understand that questioning is an important behavior. Parents may be asked to question their child concerning school products sent home thereby providing reinforcement through parental attention. Parents are provided opportunities to participate in guided observation and participation in the classroom and are assisted in small groups to transfer principles learned to application in the home environment. Finally, provision is made to provide for different parental interests through an appropriate branching of their activities. Such a program is aimed at emphasizing the complementary roles of the school and the home as loci of intellectual development.

One of the better known projects is the Parent Education Project at the University of Florida, headed by Dr. Ira Gordon (1967). The technique employed is to use disadvantaged women to teach mothers to stimulate their infants with an emphasis upon modelling for the mother who would eventually extend the behavioral pattern to the child. This research has verified that preparing parent educators is indeed a possible means of intervention, that a relationship between the parent educator and the mother can be sustained over time, and that the children involved do benefit.

Other programs, such as the Ypsilanti Project (1968), have explored the feasibility of sending teachers into the homes of disadvantaged families to provide a training program for the mother and a tutoring program for the child without an accompanying classroom program. This kind of contact permitted the systematic development of the foundations necessary for the intellectual functioning of the child and language, teaching, and child management skills in the mother.

McCarthy (1968) investigated the effect of three kinds of parent involvement on the language and intellectual abilities of Head Start children. One group attended classes only, a second group supplemented class attendance by involving parents in group meetings, and a third group attended classes along with an individualized home-visit plan to work with the parents. The parents completed a Parent Attitude Survey prior to the initiation of the program and again at the end of the treatment. Children whose parents participated in the home-visit parent involvement showed significant gains in language abilities and non-significant gains in intellectual abilities and their parents showed a significant positive change in parent attitudes. The children whose parents participated in group meetings showed non-significant gains in language abilities and intellectual functioning and their parents non-significant positive changes in attitudes. The children whose parents did not participate in any kind of parent involvement showed no significant gains and the parents reflected no change in attitudes.

Weikart (1969) stated that the data thus far suggested that preschool experiences for children and parents would "not greatly

change the measured intellectual level, but may provide the foundation necessary to produce improved academic achievement. With preschool, groups of children from limited environments may be able to better utilize the general intellectual ability they have in a school setting." It would also seem that since preschool learning experiences can influence parental involvement in the early home environment, different kinds of early education programs would influence parental involvement in different ways and to different degrees (Bishop, 1969).

Interview-Questionnaire Technique

"All theories of learning and behavior make provision for the influence of the environment on the development of human characteristics but we have not had a corresponding emphasis in our measurement procedures" (Wolf, 1964). The development and refinement of adequate instruments with which to measure early home environments and changes in early home environments has been no exception in this regard.

Efforts to get beyond global indices and to obtain environmental data capable of providing directions for program development are required. What we need to know is what happens or fails to happen, in the home and community environments of both children who are able and children who are unable to cope with school programs as they exist. "The independent variables in our investigations of learning environments should be the behaviors of socializing agents" (Henderson, 1970).

Although not the first to do so, Dave (1963) and Wolf (1964) made a significant contribution to knowledge in this area by identifying and measuring a number of environmental variables and the characteristics that define them by employing the focused interview and rating scales

procedure. They described the variables involved in the environments they studied by means of a multiple correlation. Their work demonstrates a method of describing an environment through the summarization of the characteristics of the number of variables seen as pertinent. The interview-questionnaire technique is a method by which important information relevant to the environmental variables comprising an environment can be collected and described. It is a special process in that it seeks out only the particular aspects of variables of the environment addressed by the interviewer and reported on by the parent.

Wolf (1964) enumerated some of the benefits of the interview as a data gathering technique. These benefits assume that the face to face nature of the interview increases the possibility of eliciting a high degree of co-operation on the part of the interviewee and that there is the opportunity to ask the interviewee additional questions when necessary. The oral responses provide for a greater amount of detailed information and information regarding the dynamic interactive process of the environment may be more readily obtained. While the interview technique is said to introduce the subjectivity and bias of the interviewer, this kind of distortion is reduced through the use of a structured questionnaire in order to standardize the interview. Undoubtedly, a highly structured and standardized questionnaire increases objectivity and reliability, but, in turn, it may diminish the validity of the information obtained as it reduces the flexibility of the personal interview. However, the interview-questionnaire combination incorporates many of the strengths of both techniques. What emerges is a structured or focused interview which provides enough flexibility with which to arrive at valid information.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study:

Change refers to variations in parent behavior in the home.

Parent refers to the mother or father of a child involved in the Preschool Demonstration Project.

Program refers to the preschool activities of the Play School and Readiness centers involving both children and their parents as part of the Preschool Demonstration Project.

Involvement refers to the extent and quality of parents' relationships with their children which enhance their learning.

Participation refers to parents sharing and taking part in their children's interests and activities.

Learning refers to gaining knowledge, understanding, awareness and experience.

Learning Environment refers to the whole complex of conditions, influences or forces that influence or modify an individual's gain of knowledge, understanding, awareness, and experience.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Procedure

Criteria For Selecting Families

The families chosen for this study are families whose children participated in the Preschool Demonstration Project (Bishop, 1969). These children were selected randomly from the Norwood-Delton districts of Edmonton (study boundaries, Appendix A). Families with any two of the following conditions were rejected from consideration in the study: (1) gross income exceeded \$7,000.00 per year, (2) those where the parents had attended or were attending university, and (3) those who had two more rooms than the number of persons living in the family dwelling.

The basis for selection and inclusion of families was the low probability for success in school of their children and hence their need of preschool preparation. A team of two experienced kindergarten teachers, a speech clinician, a pediatrician, a nurse and three psychologists screened the children in order to determine the status of low probability for success. It was desired that the children selected not be mentally retarded but simply limited in one or more of three dimensions. These dimensions were: intelligence, including English-language skills; social-emotional skills; and physical capabilities. The School Readiness Centre (Edmonton), a part of the Preschool Demonstration Project, serves four and five year olds who are generally normal in various abilities but who are growing slowly.

These children may be shy and uncertain with others or they may be limited in their skills for thinking, speaking and communicating.

Sample

In 1967, children selected as in need of readiness experiences were distributed randomly into three groups of thirty. The children in Group I attended the Readiness Centre; Group II children attended a Play School run by the City of Edmonton, Department of Parks and Recreation; Group III children were not involved with any program connected with the study. At the end of the preschool experience (June, 1968) there were sixteen children in the Readiness Centre group, nineteen children in the Play School group, and nineteen children in the Home group. At the time the final interviews were conducted (end of 1969 to mid-1970) there were fourteen children in the Readiness Centre group, twelve children in the Play School group and six children in the Home group. Of the fourteen children in the Readiness group twelve were boys and two were girls; of the twelve children in the Play School group six were boys and six were girls, and of the six children in the Home group three were boys and three were girls.

Over time some families lost interest or moved away or could not be contacted during the periods when interviewing was being done. In arranging for the final interviews it was found that several parents whose children had been in the Home group were least interested in any further contact with the study. At least two of these parents absolutely refused any further co-operation. They felt that their children had gained nothing from the study and the initial and follow-up contacts were of no value. This accounted in part for the severe

drop in the number of families in the Home group. The only other reason for not being able to follow families through the whole study was the difficulty in locating them and the high mobility of the families studied in general. This study considered as much information as possible obtained from the incomplete sets of interviews available, that is, instances where it was only possible to have one or two interviews with the same family.

When the data were analyzed, it was frequently found necessary to eliminate incomprehensible responses and when this occurred calculate the means of the rated responses on reduced sample sizes. This reduction was usually small but in one instance the sample decreased by four and in another by six. The sample sizes are indicated in Tables I to XII in Chapter IV.

Treatment

The data in this study was derived from three groups of parents: (1) parents whose children attended the Readiness Centre, (2) parents whose children attended the Play School, and (3) parents whose children stayed Home.

The early learning environments found in the homes of the parents described above have been studied at three different times: (1) prior to the preschool learning experiences (December, 1967), (2) on completion of the preschool learning experiences (June, 1968), and, (3) after the completion of grade I with grade II under way (December, 1969 on).

The Readiness Centre focused upon developing children's speaking, thinking, discovering and to a minor extent social-emotional skills. In general, the Play School preparation consisted of a social-emotional

experience involving both parent and child in play or recreational activities. The Home group children stayed at home.

The day to day activities that made up the Readiness and Play School programs placed no special emphasis on parent-child interaction, parent self-enhancement, or parent attitudinal change. The Readiness experience involved parents in planning and carrying out monthly meetings which pertained to themselves (speakers and tours) while the Play School program activated parents by including them in committee activities for the purpose of assisting with the Play School (planning field trips and assembling craft materials). Activities such as these indicate that although there was no direct focus on stimulating parent involvement and participation with their children these goals were there. Further evidence of efforts of the Readiness program to reach out to parents is seen in the associated comprehensive program for families. A large house was rented near the church where the children attended class and served as a drop-in centre for parents, a meeting place for teens, and a coffee shop for anyone connected with the program (Bishop, 1970). Mothers were encouraged to work in the Readiness class while their child attended, thereby learning many new and different ways of relating to him, plus gaining the opportunity to observe him interacting with others.

Parent Interviews

All parents had been interviewed in detail by means of an interview-questionnaire (Appendix B) in December, 1967 with their children's preschool experiences just under way and again in June, 1968 after the completion of the preschool experiences. This study

employed the same instrument for follow-up purposes during the period from December 1969 to mid-1970 with the children involved having completed grade I and with grade II under way. Since the original instrument developed contains questions which were not included in this study an abbreviated interview-questionnaire was prepared which relates specific questions to the specific dimensions studied here (Appendix C).

The first parent interviews (prior to the preschool experiences) were tape recorded. These were transcribed to interview-questionnaire forms by the social worker who conducted a large number of the interviews with the assistance of a student who had completed a bachelor's degree in the social sciences.

The interviewers employed in gathering the initial, intermediate and final measures of the home environments were skilled in soliciting information in interview situations as a result of having extensive backgrounds in social service. In order to increase the reliability of the responses and consistency in the initial data recording, the same interviewers were employed to administer the interview-questionnaire on all occasions with two exceptions. At the time of the final assessments one of the interviewers who participated at the initial and intermediate stages had moved away. The two remaining interviewers did all but nine of the final interviews where, due to the demands of time, they were assisted by the aforementioned student.

During the intermediate and final interviews the parent responses were recorded directly on interview-questionnaire forms. With a few exceptions, efforts were made to conduct the parent interviews in the parent's own home. Most often it was the mother who was interviewed.

Sometimes it was found necessary to conduct the interviews in the interviewer's office or home. Prior to the final parent interviews a letter explaining this study's relationship to the Preschool Demonstration Project and the importance of a further contact was mailed to the parents involved (Appendix E).

Analysis of Results

The data obtained were analyzed by comparing the mean number of responses in each of the three categorical ratings on the twelve dimensions (environmental variables) examined in this study. The variation observed in the parent responses is represented in Chapter IV by Graphs I to XII.

Study Limitations

This study can only be considered an exploratory attempt to detect, informally quantify and analyze changes in home environments as influenced by children's participation in preschool experiences. Factors present before and after treatment not immediately discernible restrict the breadth of changes studied. The construct being studied, namely the "change" in parent involvement with their children, is itself conceived differently over time. The greatest problem encountered has been the difficulty of maintaining contact with the same individuals over the period of years. "Obviously the longer the survey runs, the more attrition occurs, and the more difficult it is to maintain researcher - respondent contact" (Fox, 1969). Such considerations suggest that limitations in the measurement process allow for only tentative conclusions regarding the environmental change viewed in this study.

The Interview

The disadvantage of the focused interview required by this approach "make(s) data collection and analysis expensive and time consuming" (Henderson, 1970).

The interview technique necessitates that the questions employed be phrased in a manner conducive to natural conversation, easily understood by anyone, and readily answered verbally. It is also vital that the interview(er) be consistent from subject to subject and from time to time for "unless the observer can manifest the same uniform patterns of behavior to all those who are observed, he introduces a series of quite irrelevant variables into the situation" (Travers, 1964).

The interview procedure is further limited in its usefulness by the contamination introduced by its instructional effect when it is used on more than one occasion with the same population. When people are personally asked questions, especially questions having to do with the dynamic interactive processes of their home, they are likely to think further about and view at least a few of these topics as instructional points of departure.

In this study the group of parents whose children stayed home are assumed to act as a partial control group. However, the mere inclusion of these families has altered them as genuine controls. The interview administered to these parents initially and at the intermediate stage may have been interpreted by them as being instructive, in a sense as classes in how to prepare their child for school (Bishop, 1969).

The Instrument

The environmental variables in this study were originally stated in quite general terms and only later given specificity and definition

by looking at their operational features. The process characteristics of each variable, that is the specific behaviors of parents and others in the home that are likely to be influenced by a child's pertinent preschool experience, are the product of successive approximations. For example, in considering a variable such as the father's involvement with the child it was first necessary to break this dimension into behaviors that potentially may be influenced by the child's preschool experience. In this instance the things that the father and child do together, the father's willingness and ability to care for the child, and the father's part in dressing, meals, or taking the child to school were considered. Questions to be asked of the parents specific to these behaviors were then formulated.

The Sample of Parent Behavior Provided in the Interview

Once specified, the process characteristics comprising each environmental variable have been given further clarity through questions designed to conceptualize clearly and elicit accurately information about specific behaviors. The following questions were asked of parents in looking at the father's involvement with the child: (1) What kinds of things do they do together? (2) Does your husband take care of your child? (3) How about helping him get dressed, getting his meals, and taking him to school? These questions attempt to focus specifically on and elicit information about particular types of behavior and conditions in the home as told to the interviewer.

A difficulty in the way of obtaining valid responses lies in the fact that emotional investments and familial relationships are influenced and altered by parent-child sex differences and similarities.

For example, some studies point out that a parent feels more responsible for rearing his own sex child (Hoffman and Lippitt, 1960). Questions about upbringing are going to be more threatening to the parent of the same sex and he will be more likely to respond defensively with socially acceptable distortions. More specifically a mother's responses may be more valid when discussing a boy in the family than a girl. Parents may consciously or unconsciously give a picture of what they would like to have happen rather than what actually occurs.

Questions To and Responses Of Parents

The questions formulated for such a questionnaire convey only a general flavor of the characteristics of the behavior being studied. They are limited in what they encompass. In the questionnaire employed the questions were deliberately made short and quite specific because of the great amount of time required to answer a large number of very detailed questions. It was also found to be important that the questions be phrased in such a way that either parent could answer them.

The analysis of parent responses in this study is essentially an analysis of the interviewer's reception, interpretation, and description of parent responses.

Parent - Interviewer Rapport

A source of error to which the interview-questionnaire is particularly prone occurs when the questions asked convert the interview situation into one of threat. The tendency to respond in this case in a manner that the interviewee perceives as socially acceptable is almost automatic. Different measured attitudes can be elicited from the same subjects in different social situations and an attitude can be modified

by different relationships between a respondent and the individual to whom he is expressing an attitude (Kelman, 1953). For these reasons the rapport established and the co-operation elicited from parents during the three contacts made with them varied with the interviewer involved.

Rating Procedures

The scoring of the instrument employed in this study provides a further source of error. The intermediate series of interviews (June, 1968) were scored by a graduate student research assistant at approximately that time. The first and last sets of interviews were rated by the researcher after careful scrutiny of previous scoring procedures and actual ratings. In order to assess the reliability of the rating procedure used by the researcher, the intermediate interview protocols were rerated and the results compared with the previous ratings. The reliability was high in all but four or five instances. Forced choices outside the established criteria were avoided by deleting these responses. Sample sizes were accordingly reduced and are indicated in Tables I to XII.

Study Hypotheses

Participation of parents with their children is believed to be a significant dynamic interactive process in the home environment. Parent - child interactions are considered as having the propensity to change when properly influenced. To illustrate the importance of these changes one need only consider that their quality is related to children's understanding of the future and how positively or negatively they feel about themselves.

The early home environments studied have been assessed on twelve dimensions or environmental variables by looking at certain of their characteristics. These variables have been examined as much as possible in terms of their process characteristics which describe what parents do rather than what they are. The variables studied are viewed as being a selective representation of many environmental conditions hypothesized to be influenced by preschool experiences and were originally chosen for their measurability.

Dimensions of Involvement

Hypothesis I: Preschool programs for children differentially influence the educational goals of parents for their children.

Educational goals were considered in terms of how much education parents would like their children to have and how well defined these aspirations might be. An increase in parent involvement may mean that the kind of settings and stimulation that parents provide for their children change along with the amount of education they expect their children to have.

Hypothesis II: Preschool programs for children differentially influence the educational plans parents have for their children.

Educational planning was believed to involve parents' reaction to the idea of their child not reaching a desired level of education, the question of who would decide whether or not the child would drop out of high school, and the kinds of financial planning for education thought to be important. Time alone probably causes changes in parents' visions for and expectations of their children but increased parental involvement is likely to accentuate these changes and stimulate more appropriate planning for their children's future in general.

Hypothesis III: Preschool programs for children differentially increase and vary the amount of mothers' exposure to literature.

Exposure to literature was assessed by the number of new magazines being subscribed to, the number of new books read, and changes in the kind of reading enjoyed. It is believed that increased parent involvement and participation will cause qualitative changes in the home in such things as the degree to which parents seek information from a variety of sources. These sources may be special classes, discussions, radio and television, or books and magazines.

Hypothesis IV: Preschool programs for children differentially increase the amount of children's exposure to literature.

A child's exposure to literature was assessed in terms of the amount of reading done to him by a parent, and new books and magazines. Increased parent involvement suggests an increase in the sharing and interactive exchanges that exist between parent and child in such activities as looking at picture books, reading, and building a library. It is recognized that the interest children have in books is likely to increase with age but it is believed that this increase will be stimulated by greater parental involvement.

Hypothesis V: Preschool programs for children differentially increase the amount of or vary the ways mothers spend their leisure time.

Changes in a mother's time for leisure activities was gauged by looking at whether or not new social or sport activities were being pursued and also at the amount of television viewed. Considered significant here is the fact that television can be used as a time spacer and

can be utilized in an active or a consuming fashion. Greater parent involvement with and commitment to themselves and their children is believed to influence the manner in which leisure time is spent by increasing the range of activities as well as the actual block of time.

Hypothesis VI: Preschool programs for children differentially increase fathers' involvement with their children.

Paternal involvement was measured in terms of the father's part in caring for the child (dressing, meals and so on) as well as the kinds of activities the child and father might perform together. Quantity and quality in the interaction were both considered important. The father's involvement with his child is considered an extremely important variable in that it reflects the degree of mutual participation of parents with their children. Paternal involvement signifies, in part, the extent to which the home environment is a product of a shared team venture.

Hypothesis VII: Preschool programs for children differentially increase parental agreement in relation to the discipline of children.

The extent to which parental decisions on matters of discipline are shared was assessed by ascertaining differences of opinion regarding the most desirable degree of strictness and by considering an example of disagreement between the parents. Increased parental involvement may reflect itself in matters of child discipline by supporting the development of a cooperative venture in management and responsibility.

Hypothesis VIII: Preschool programs for children differentially increase the number of decisions made jointly by both parents relative to the care and management of their children.

The parental decisions looked at were those determining the extent of the child's freedom (how far the child is allowed to go by himself) and caring for the child's health (decisions about health problems, calling the doctor, and keeping the child in). Parents were queried to determine whether father, mother or both parents are most often involved in the decision making process. Increased involvement of parents would likely promote the sharing of responsibility and the development of a team approach to decision making between parents.

Hypothesis IX: Preschool programs for children differentially reduce the turmoil between the program - child and siblings:

Turmoil between siblings was thought of as not "getting along with" and studied in terms of the kinds of interaction that existed between siblings. Although turmoil between siblings usually decreases with age, it is believed that increased parental involvement with their children will facilitate these relationships. Increased parental commitment to and participation with their children probably helps reduce excessive competition for parental attention, provides opportunities for disagreements to be "talked out", and diminishes the number and seriousness of quarrels through the development of respect for each other.

Hypothesis X: Preschool programs for children differentially promote growth in children as seen by their parents:

A child's growth was assessed in the changes that parents observed in the kinds of activities their child performed (more "grown-up behavior") and in the progress he has made in his attempts to take part in making family decisions. Greater parental participation and

involvement with children probably stimulates child growth through the provision of opportunities for increased environmental manipulations and parent-child activities and ultimately allows children a part in family decision making.

Hypothesis XI: Preschool programs for children differentially improve the communication between parents and children.

The following areas were examined as being pertinent to parent-child communication: parents' feelings as to whether or not it was "easier" to talk to their children, the number of questions a child asked, how the parent went about answering these, and the extent to which the child seemed to understand these responses. Increased parental involvement with and emotional commitment to children very probably stimulates the development of sensitivity towards, appreciation for, and interest in communication with others. Upon becoming aware of the potential of their children's inquiries for stimulating intellectual growth and judgment, parents are more likely to reinforce this kind of interchange by providing time for the sharing of interests and concerns, through listening more carefully, and by supplying more meaningful responses to their children's questions.

Hypothesis XII: Preschool programs for children differentially increase the role children have in establishing rules of behavior.

The kinds of rules that existed for the child were considered in an effort to determine the extent to which they were specified. The parent's concept of what the child's role in establishing these rules should be was sought. The parent was asked "what voice" he thought the child should have in making rules. Greater parent involvement is

believed to result in children having a greater voice in setting rules of behavior through increased sharing, understanding, and respect for other opinions as well as greater acceptance of the need for realistic limits.

For each of these variables or dimensions of involvement three ordinal ratings have been made progressing from the highest or most to the lowest or least. An explanation of the scoring criteria for each of the three levels is provided in Appendix C.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyses of Results

For reasons previously outlined the sample sizes employed in this study frequently vary. The Readiness group is the largest (14) and its predominance of boys (12 boys to 2 girls) probably reflects that mothers of boys were more concerned about their sons' success in school and therefore more willing to participate. The Play School (6 boys to 6 girls) and the Home (3 boys to 3 girls) groups more accurately represent random samples. The small Home group suggests that the few families who remained in this group had a special need to associate and cooperate throughout the three interview sessions. Their motivations for remaining in the study may have in varying degrees contaminated their responses.

Graphic comparisons have been used to analyze the parental responses to the specific questions relating to the several dimensions of the home environment studied. In most instances the differences in the changes occurring between initial, intermediate and final interviews for the Readiness, Play School and Home groups are most clearly demonstrated by the first or "well defined" ("extensive", "agree", "mother", "yes", "better", "specified rules - involved child") category of responses.

The following analyses provide a speculative examination of the variation in the trends observed in relation to each of the environmental variables considered in this study.

Variations in Parent Involvement

I. Educational goals of parents for children

Findings:

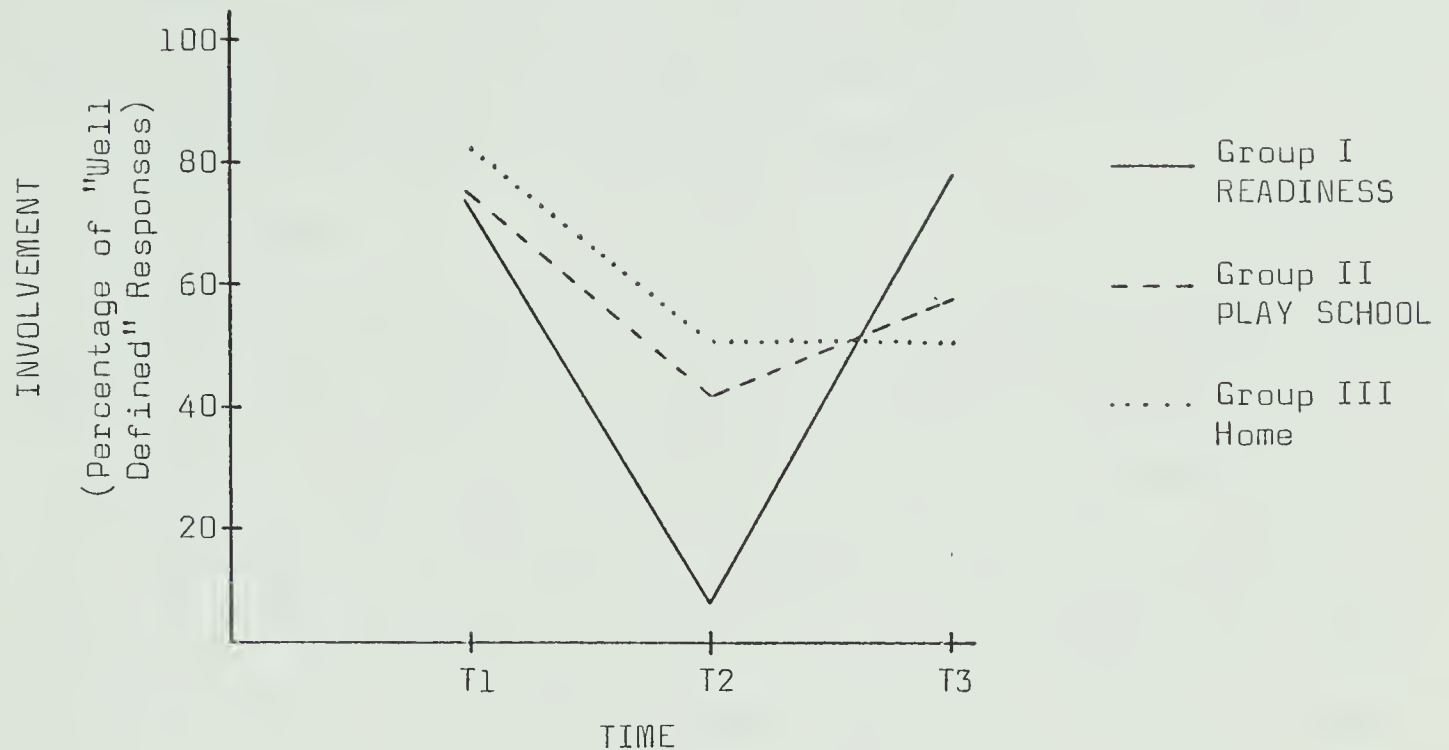
Parents were asked: (1) Have you given any thought or any more thought as to how much education you would like your child to have? (2) Would you like your child to finish high school, technical school or college? (3) Would you like your child to go beyond college, for example, to attend graduate school or obtain a specialist's degree in law or medicine? Their responses appear in Table I.

TABLE I
EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF PARENTS FOR CHILDREN.

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-14	N-14	N-14	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-6	N-6	N-6
Well Defined	71.43	7.14	78.57	75.00	41.67	58.33	83.33	50.00	50.00
Limited	21.43	92.86	21.43	25.00	50.00	33.33	.00	50.00	33.33
Lacking	7.14	.00	.00	.00	8.33	8.33	16.67	.00	16.67

Parents in the Readiness group evidenced the greatest variation and parents in the Home group the least variation in their desire to

GRAPH I
EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF PARENTS FOR CHILDREN



have their child's education progress as far as possible or at least as far as the child wished. All three groups showed a marked drop in the number of parents with "well defined" goals for their children in the intermediate interviews following which the treatment groups showed gains.

Discussion:

Although variation in goal setting behavior occurred in all three groups of parents, the greater variation of the treatment groups is suggestive of program dependence.

The Readiness group parents varied most in their desire to have their child's education progress as far as possible or at least as far as the child wished. It is speculated that the initial decrease in the number of parents with "well defined" goals in this group may be

attributed to the acquisition of a more realistic view of their children as fostered by the Readiness experience. The later increase may come as a result of their children's improved functioning following the Readiness experience and some time in regular school classes.

II. Educational plans of parents for children

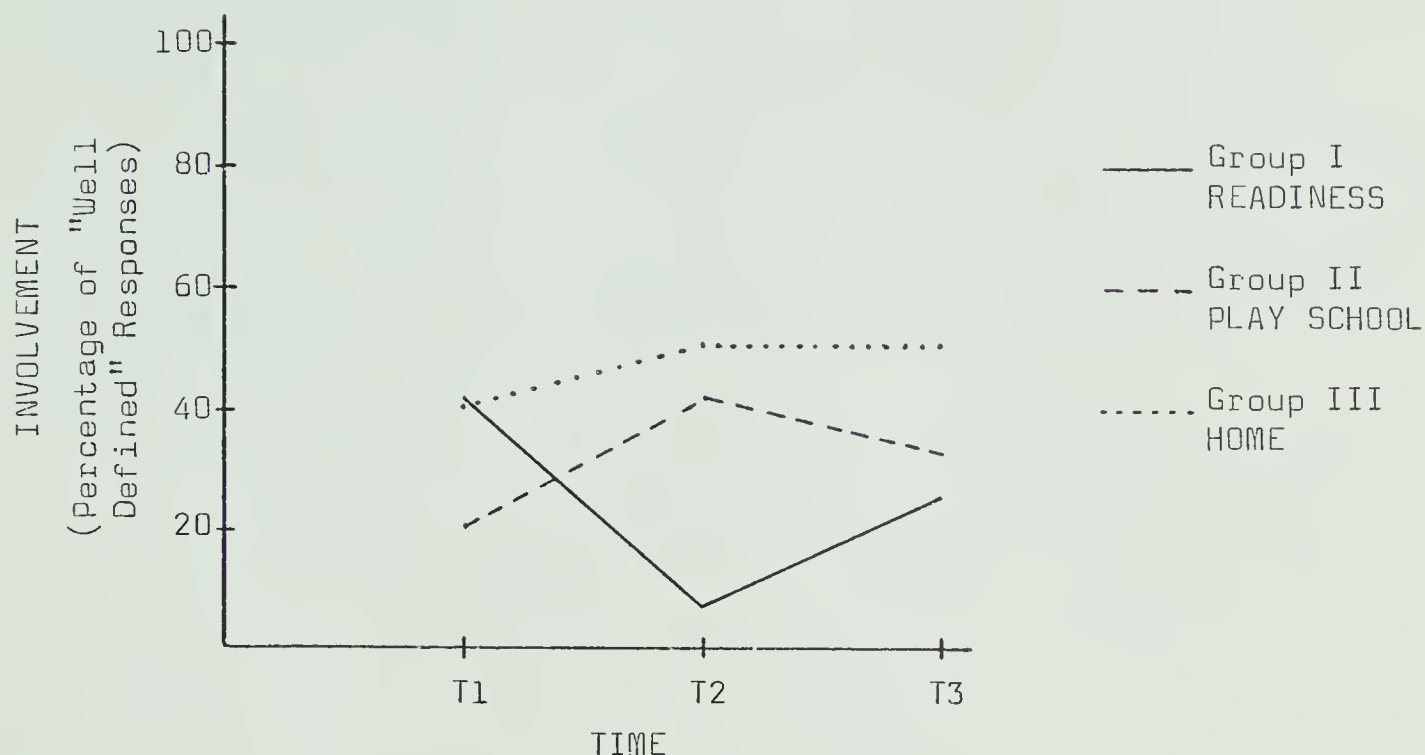
Findings:

Parents were next asked: (1) If it should turn out that for one reason or another your child is unable to obtain as much education as you would like, how do you think you would react? (2) Would you be very disappointed? (3) Would you accept the situation and not let it bother you? (4) How would you feel if your child dropped out of high school? (5) Would you let him/her make his/her own decision in this regard? (6) What plans have you made to finance your child's education? Their responses appear in Table II.

TABLE II
EDUCATIONAL PLANS OF PARENTS FOR CHILDREN

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-12	N-14	N-12	N-10	N-12	N-12	N-5	N-6	N-6
Well Defined	41.67	7.14	25.00	20.00	41.67	33.33	40.00	50.00	50.00
Limited	50.00	64.29	66.67	70.00	50.00	50.00	40.00	16.67	50.00
Lacking	8.33	28.57	8.33	10.00	8.33	16.67	20.00	33.33	.00

GRAPH II
EDUCATIONAL PLANS OF PARENTS FOR CHILDREN



The Readiness parents' involvement in educational planning decreased initially and then began to increase while the Play School parents' involvement was just the opposite, increasing first and then decreasing. Home group involvement increased and then remained constant. The greatest variation occurred in the treatment groups.

Discussion:

The greater variation in the treatment groups again suggests program dependence. "Well defined" educational plans in this study implied definite disappointment should the child not reach the predetermined level of education, specific plans regarding the financing of higher education, and not allowing the child the option of dropping out. The movement in parental involvement in educational planning suggests that some selective attention is being directed towards or

away from any plans for the child's future education. This variation may mean, for example, that a readiness experience may foster realism in parents by lowering the expectations they have for their children as a function of the uncertainty or confusion they feel regarding the costs of future education. One might describe parents as becoming less involved at a conceptual level in their aspirations and plans for their children and moving towards seeing their child and plans for his future at a more emotional level.

The more marked variation of the Readiness group in establishing goals and educational plans for their children may be related to the number of boys in the Readiness group. Parents may attend more to establishing goals and future plans for boys than for girls.

III. Mothers' reading and exposure to literature

Findings:

Mothers were asked: (1) What are you reading? (2) Are you subscribing to any new magazines and if so which ones? (3) How many books have you been reading (or) have you read since we last talked, and if any which ones? (4) Has there been any change in the kinds of books that you like to read? Their responses appear in Table III.

Readiness and Play School parents' exposure to literature followed a slight decrease - increase pattern with the Play School parents showing slightly greater variation. The control parents showed no variation on this dimension except when both the complete and incomplete sets of responses were studied together. Here the control parents showed a slight decrease followed by a slight increase while the Readiness group's exposure to literature showed almost a constant decrease.

TABLE III-1
MOTHERS' READING AND EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-13	N-14	N-14	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-6	N-6	N-6
Extensive	30.77	14.29	21.43	25.00	.00	16.67	33.33	33.33	33.33
Limited	38.46	42.86	50.00	50.00	75.00	75.00	66.67	16.67	66.67
Lacking	30.77	42.86	28.57	25.00	25.00	8.53	.00	50.00	.00

GRAPH III-1
MOTHERS' READING AND EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE

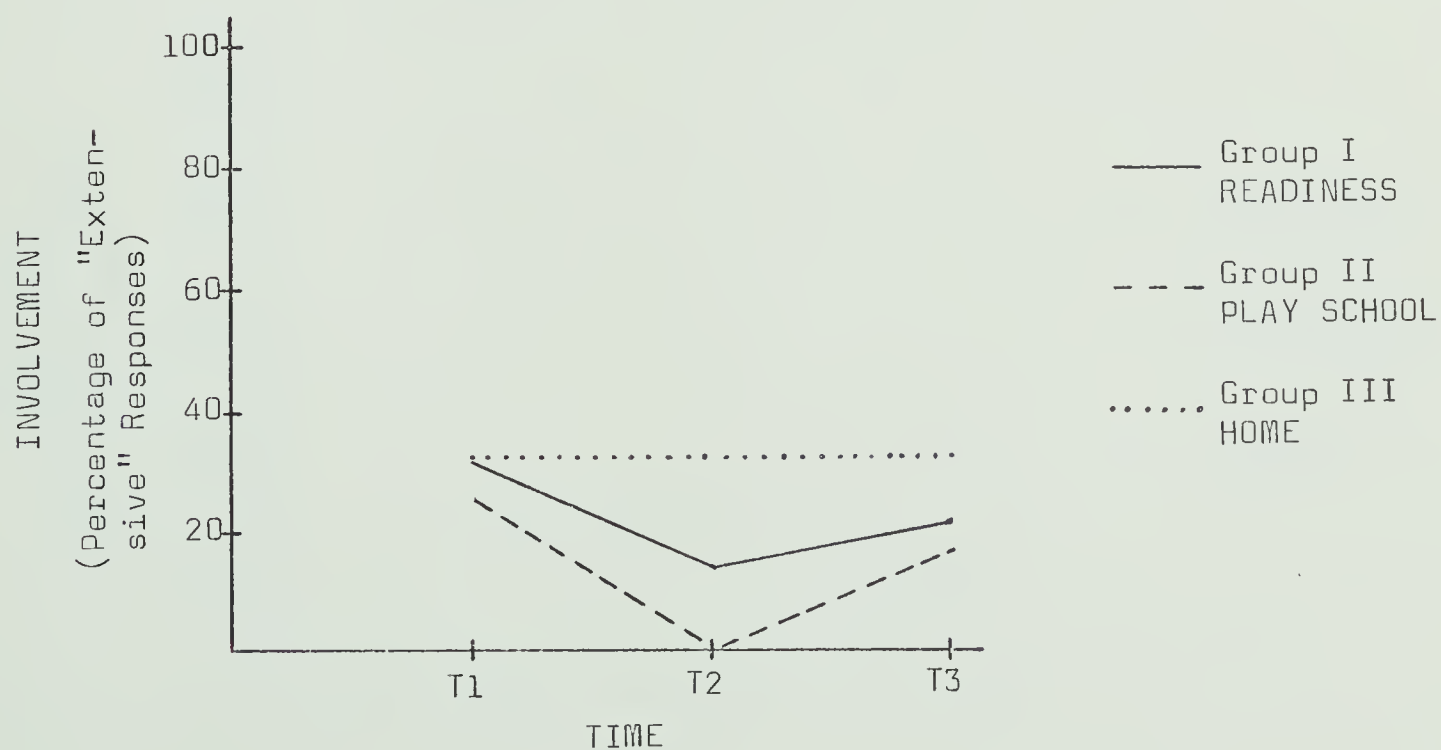


TABLE III-2

MOTHERS' READING AND EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE

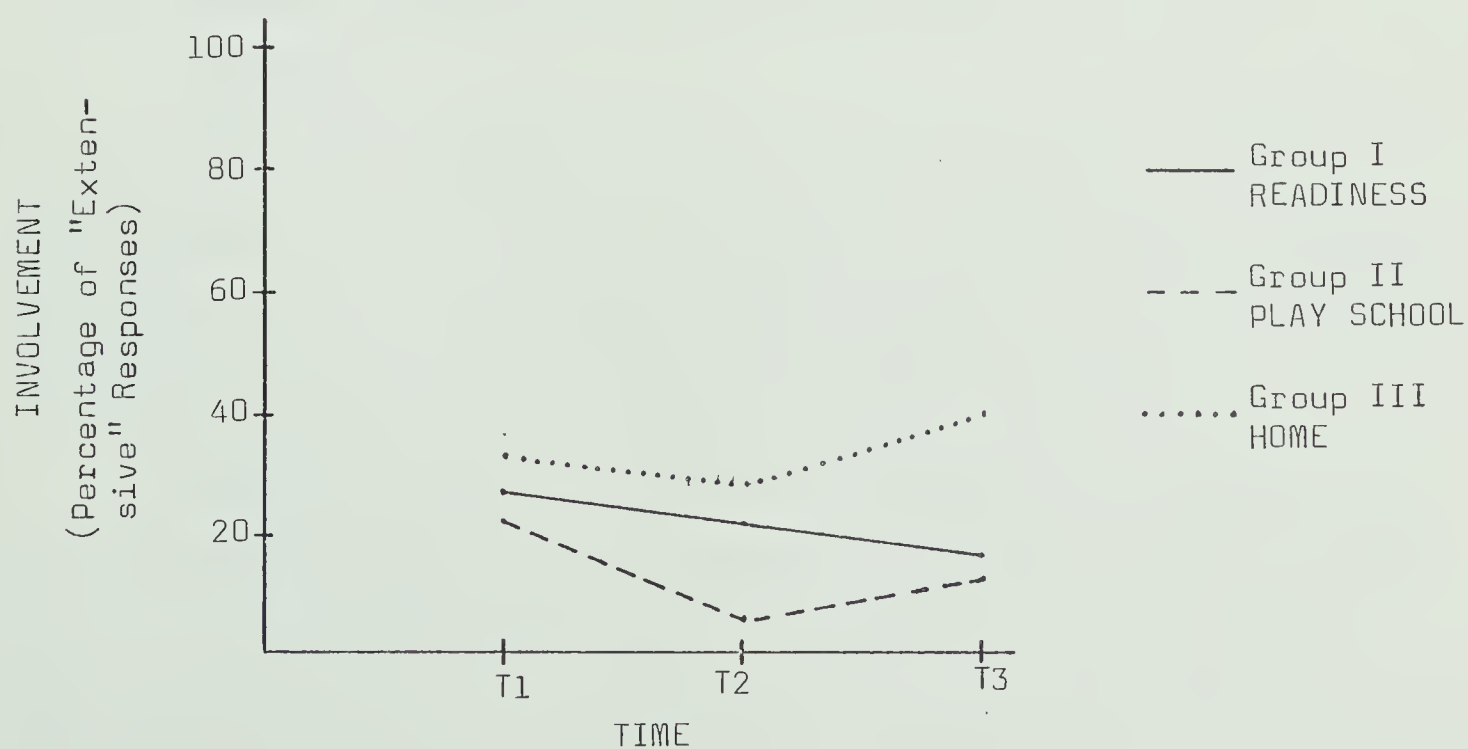
Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-15	N-18	N-19	N-13	N-17	N-15	N-6	N-18	N-10
Extensive	26.67	22.22	15.79	23.08	5.88	13.33	33.33	27.78	40.00
Limited	46.67	38.89	52.63	46.15	70.59	80.00	66.67	33.33	50.00
Lacking	26.67	38.89	31.59	30.77	23.53	6.67	.00	38.89	10.00

GRAPH III-2

MOTHERS' READING AND EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE

Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses



Discussion:

The over-all variation on this dimension was small. As there was no change in the control group, the change that occurred in the treatment groups suggests some relationship to the programs.

During the preschool treatments the mothers of children in the Play School and Readiness groups tended to move away from literature. One might speculate that since exposure to literature for mothers of children in the Home group remained constant perhaps the variation in the other two groups can be attributed to those parents becoming more involved with their children and community activities and having less time to read. The trends noted here were not supported when both the complete and incomplete sets of responses were studied together. The involvement of the control group in this case did not remain constant and the involvement of the Readiness group decreased slightly throughout the study.

IV. Children's exposure to literature at home

Findings:

Parents were asked: (1) Since your child has been involved in our preschool project have you been doing any more reading to him/her? (2) Does your child have any new books? (3) Have you subscribed to any children's magazines? Their responses appear in Table IV.

The Readiness group's exposure increased and then dropped off, the Play School group's exposure decreased constantly, and the control group's exposure decreased initially followed by a marked increase. When both complete and incomplete sets of responses were considered, the

TABLE IV-1

CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE AT HOME

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-12	N-14	N-14	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-5	N-6	N-6
Extensive	50.00	64.29	21.43	50.00	41.67	33.33	80.00	16.67	50.00
Limited	50.00	28.57	64.29	41.67	58.33	50.00	20.00	33.33	50.00
Lacking	.00	7.14	14.29	8.33	.00	16.67	.00	50.00	.00

GRAPH IV-1

CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE AT HOME

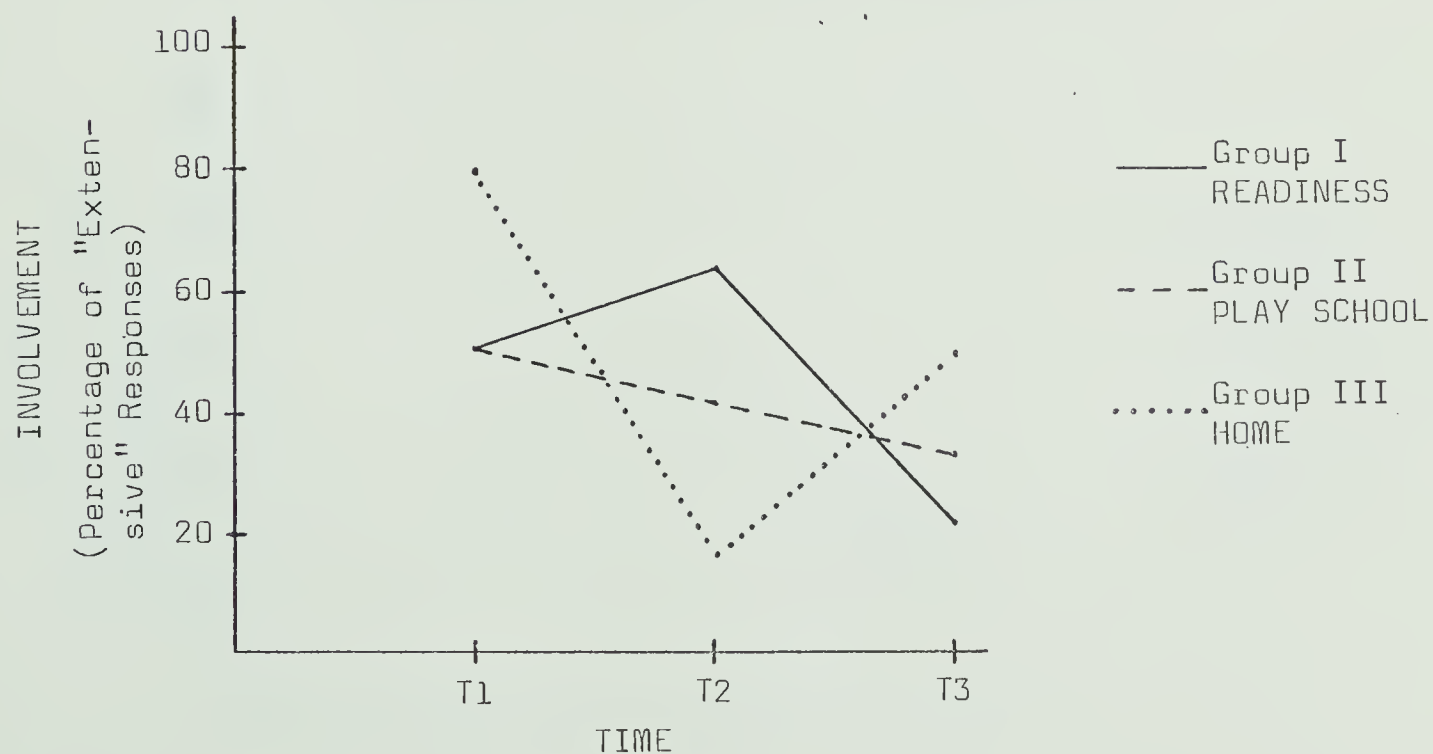


TABLE IV-2

CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE AT HOME

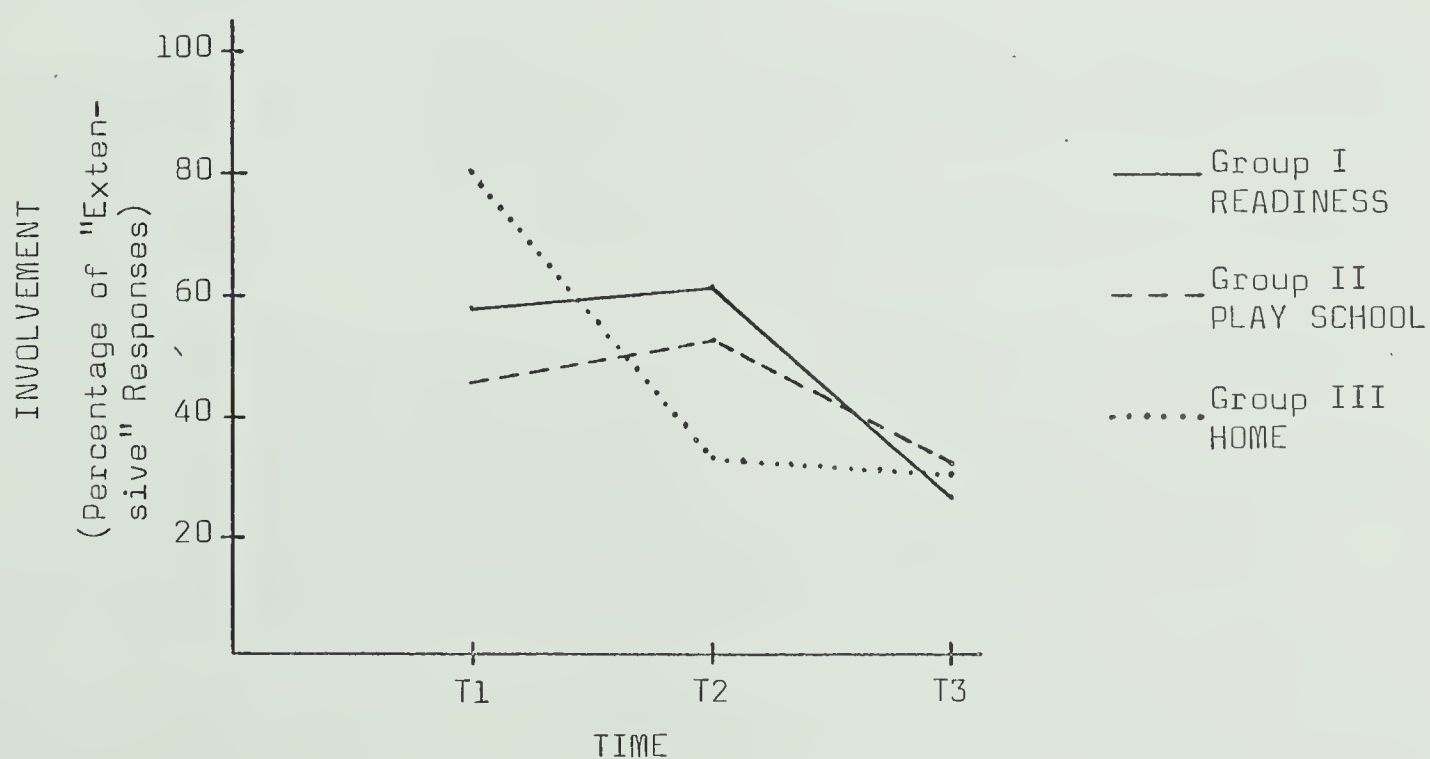
Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-14	N-18	N-19	N-13	N-17	N-15	N-5	N-12	N-4
Extensive	57.14	61.11	26.32	46.15	52.94	33.33	80.00	33.33	30.00
Limited	42.86	33.33	63.16	46.15	41.18	53.33	20.00	50.00	70.00
Lacking	.00	5.56	10.53	7.69	5.88	13.33	.00	16.67	.00

GRAPH IV-2

CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO LITERATURE AT HOME

Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses



variation in the Play School group's exposure followed the increase - decrease pattern of the Readiness group quite closely.

Discussion:

The variation that occurred in the involvement of the three groups of parents as reflected in their children's exposure to literature suggests considerable program dependency even though this cannot be substantiated.

The researcher would have postulated that those children taking part in the Readiness experience would as a result of this stimulation to themselves and their parents have consistently experienced more exposure to literature at home. However, increases in their exposure to literature did not persist beyond the end of the Readiness experience. When both the complete and incomplete sets of responses were studied the Play School group followed a similar pattern.

V. Mothers' time for leisure activities

Findings:

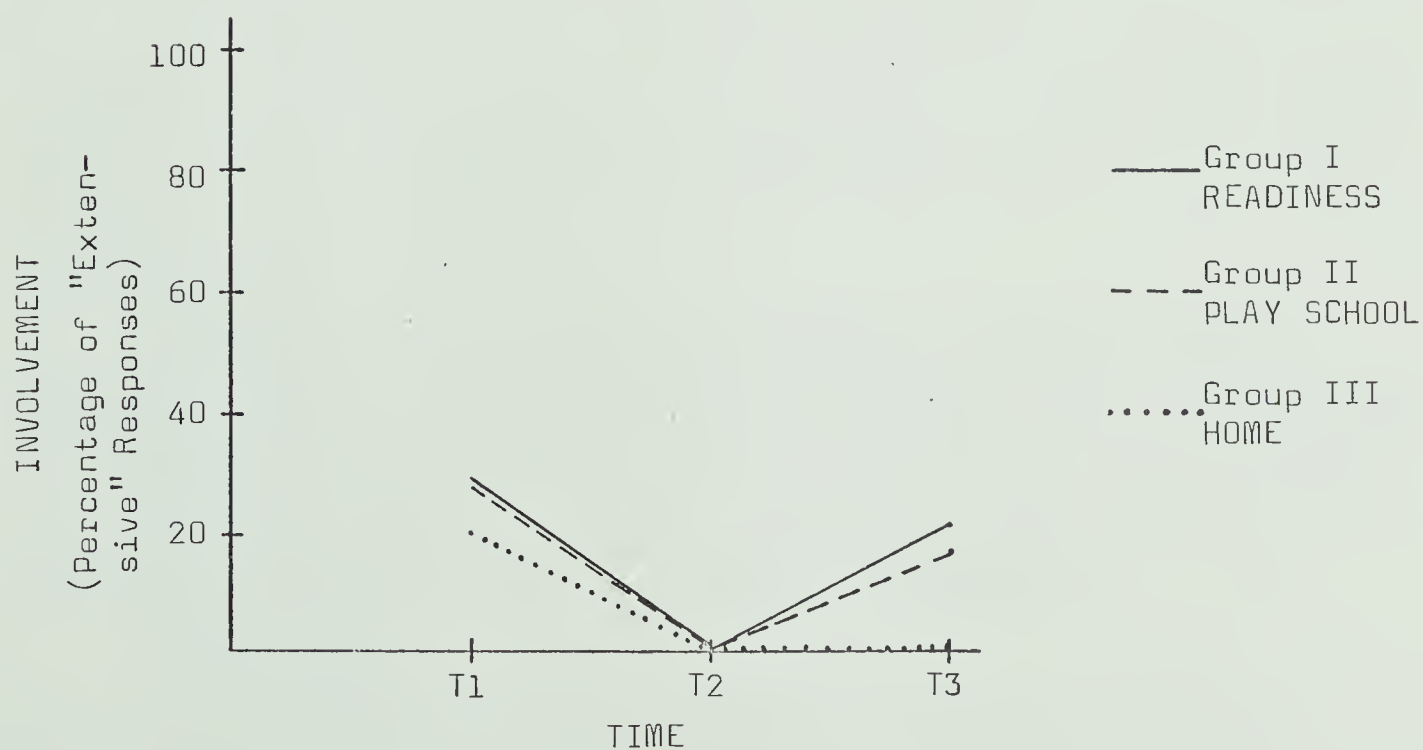
Mothers were asked: (1) Have you changed or do you belong to any new social groups such as curling or bowling groups? (2) How much time of the day do you spend watching television? Their responses appear in Table V.

The treatment groups followed a similar decrease - increase pattern of change in involvement in relation to the mothers' time for leisure activities while the Home group's involvement decreased initially and remained constant following the program.

TABLE V
MOTHERS' TIME FOR LEISURE ACTIVITIES

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-14	N-14	N-14	N-11	N-12	N-12	N-5	N-6	N-6
Extensive	28.57	.00	21.43	27.27	.00	16.67	20.00	.00	.00
Limited	64.29	85.71	71.43	45.45	91.67	83.33	80.00	50.00	100.00
Lacking	8.33	14.29	8.33	27.27	8.33	.00	.00	50.00	.00

GRAPH V
MOTHERS' TIME FOR LEISURE ACTIVITIES



Discussion:

A treatment relationship may be present in that both treatment groups showed greater variation than did the control group. The mothers' involvement with leisure activities increased in both cases after an initial drop during treatment. Although little explanation is possible, it could be speculated that a decrease in a mother's time for and variety of leisure activities may be the result of her being involved in other ways during the preschool experiences and that when her children enter grade I the experiences of the year before stimulate new approaches to leisure. It is also possible that these findings may simply reflect an increase in the amount of time mothers have for television as their children grow older.

VI. Fathers' involvement with children

Findings:

Fathers were asked: (1) How are you now involved in the care, play and discipline of your child? (2) What kinds of things do you do together? (3) Do you take care of your child? (4) How about helping him get dressed, getting his meals, and taking him to school? Their responses appear in Table VI.

The Readiness and Home groups followed a marked increase - decrease pattern of change in paternal involvement with their children. The Play School group varied the least showing only a slight increase during and a moderate decrease following the program.

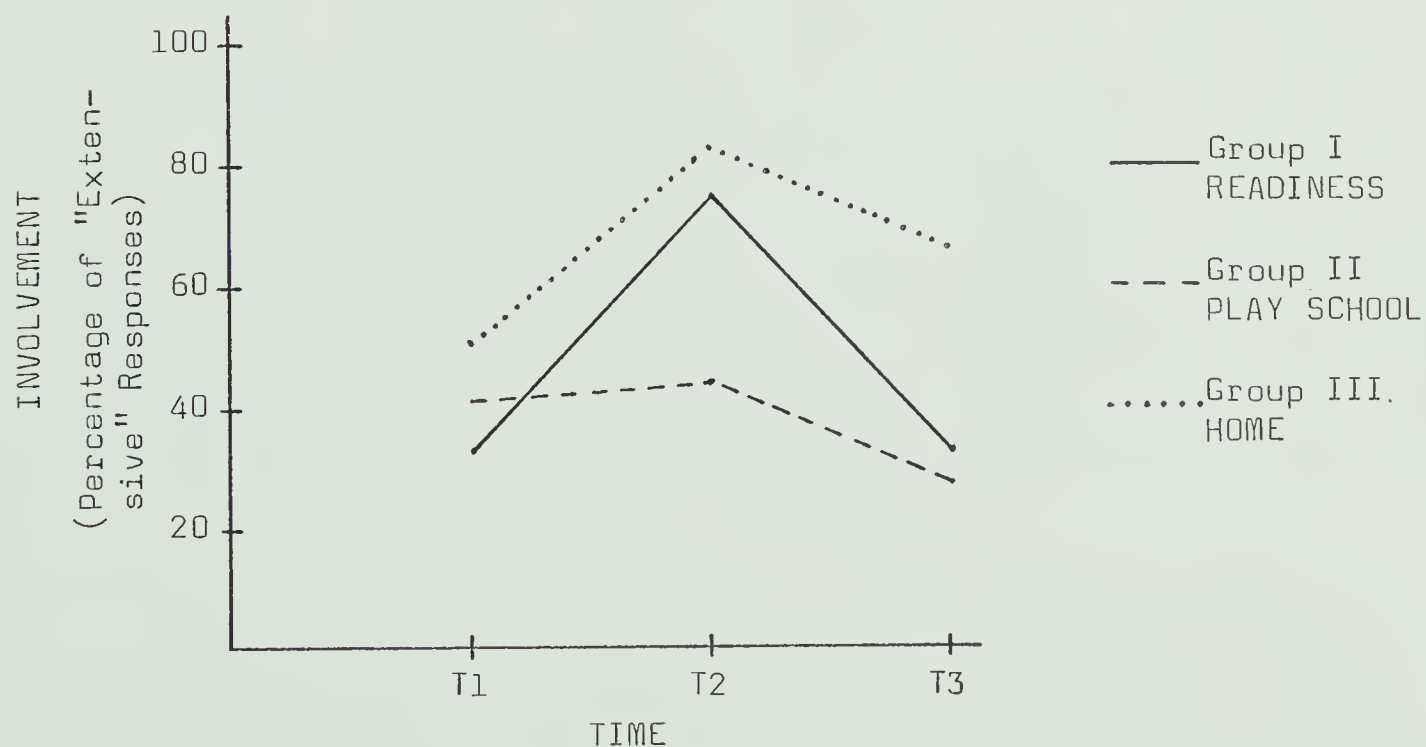
Discussion:

The variation in paternal involvement in all three groups suggests considerable program dependence. One might speculate that the

TABLE VI
FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILDREN

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-11	N-11	N-6	N-6	N-6
Extensive	33.33	75.00	33.33	41.67	45.45	27.27	50.00	83.33	66.67
Limited	58.33	25.00	58.33	50.00	45.45	72.73	50.00	16.67	33.33
Lacking	8.33	.00	8.33	8.33	9.09	.00	.00	.00	.00

GRAPH VI
FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILDREN



decreases in fathers' involvement following the programs might be related to increased involvement on the part of mothers or simply a reflection of the short term stimulation provided by the programs.

VII. Parental agreement on discipline

Findings:

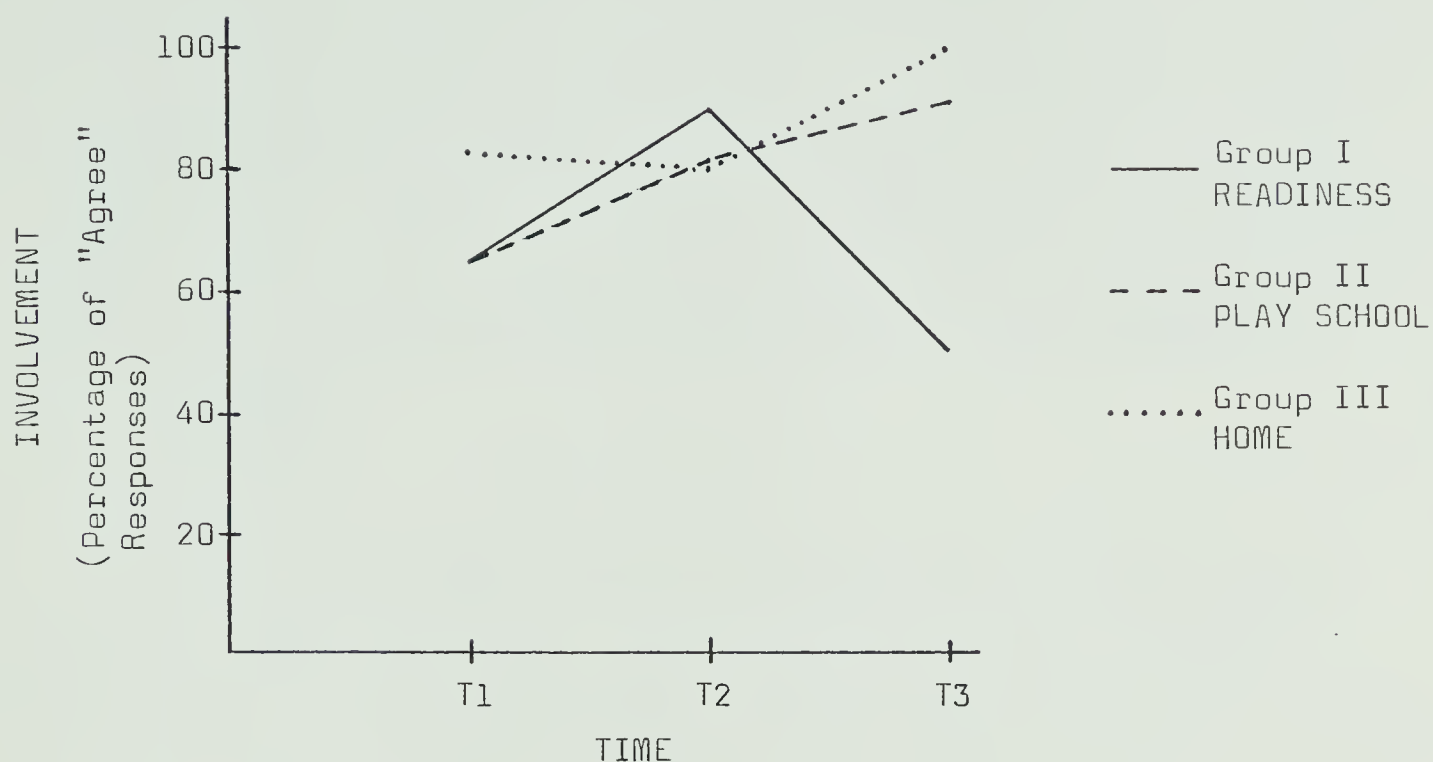
Parents were asked: (1) How would you say you and your husband/wife agree about the best way to handle your child? (2) Does your husband think you are too strict or not strict enough (or) do you think your wife is too strict or not strict enough? (3) Can you give an example of a case where you didn't agree entirely? Their responses appear in Table VII.

TABLE VII
PARENTAL AGREEMENT ON DISCIPLINE

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-12	N-10	N-12	N-12	N-11	N-11	N-6	N-5	N-6
Agree	66.67	90.00	50.00	66.67	81.81	90.90	83.33	80.00	100.00
Disagree	33.33	10.00	50.00	16.67	18.18	9.09	16.67	.00	.00
Undecided	.00	.00	.00	16.67	.00	.00	.00	20.00	.00

Variation in parental agreement on matters of discipline was greatest after the treatment programs. The extent to which the Readiness group agreed increased and then dropped off; the Play School group

GRAPH VII
PARENTAL AGREEMENT ON DISCIPLINE



increased steadily; and the Home group decreased slightly and then increased.

Discussion:

The variation in all groups suggests at least some relationship to the programs. The Readiness and control groups, in a sense the two extremes, seem to vary the most. The shifts in the amount of agreement on discipline in all three groups of parents suggest that the preschool programs may have stimulated greater attention to this matter. The writer is not able to advance explanations regarding the variation in the group of parents whose children stayed home other than the possibility that this response is related to their having been interviewed.

Parents whose children took part in the Readiness and Play School experiences initially seem to have moved towards greater agree-

ment on matters of discipline. Later with the children attending regular school classes this influence is not clear. The greater initial increase in parental agreement in the Readiness group than in the Play School group may be related to the preponderance of boys in the Readiness group sample (12 boys to 2 girls). Parents may more readily agree on matters relating to the discipline of boys than girls.

VIII. Major parental decisions about the care and management of children.

Findings:

Parents were asked: (1) Who now seems to be making the main decisions about the child? (2) Who decides how far your child is allowed to go by himself/herself? (3) Who decides about health matters, such as, calling the doctor or keeping him indoors for the day? Their responses appear in Table VIII.

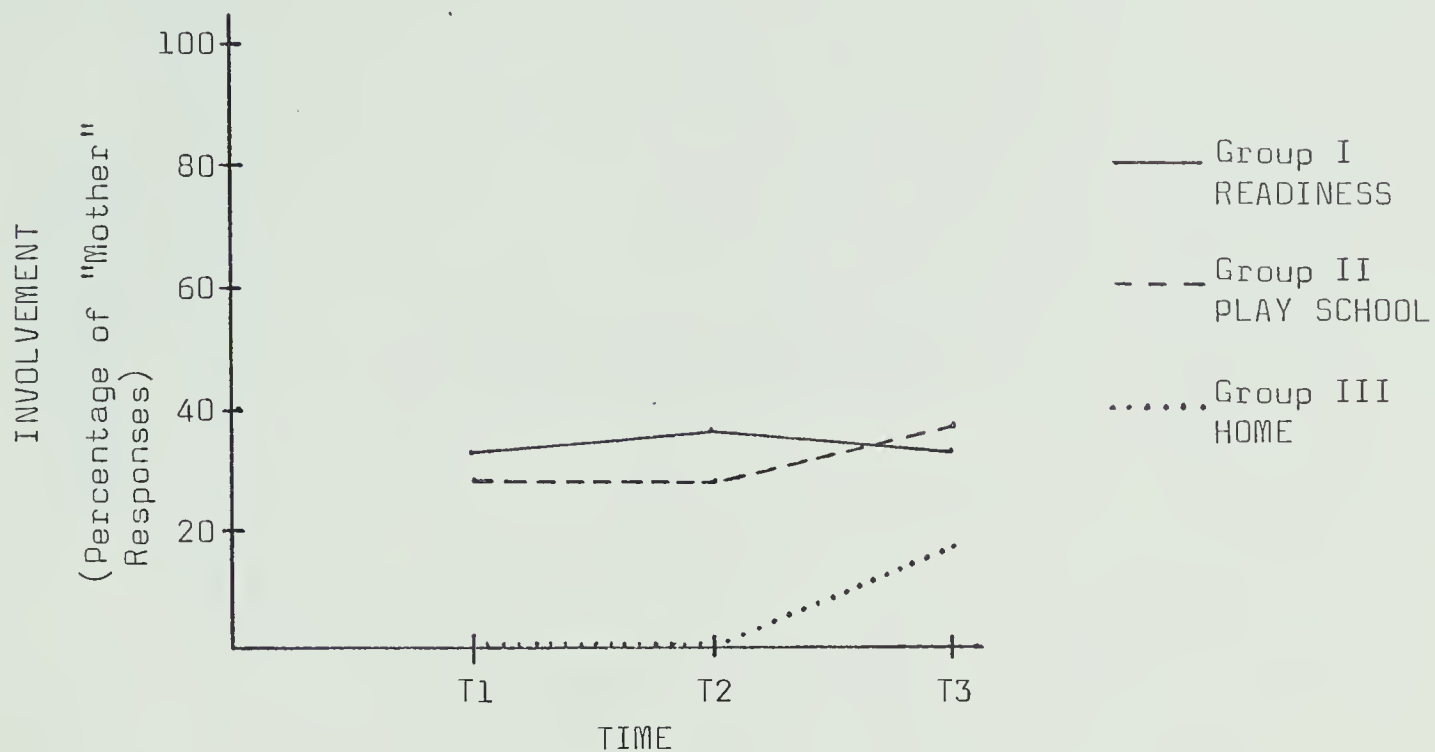
TABLE VIII

MAJOR PARENTAL DECISIONS ABOUT THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-12	N-11	N-12	N-11	N-11	N-11	N-6	N-6	N-6
Mother	33.33	36.36	33.33	27.27	27.27	36.36	.00	.00	16.67
Father	16.67	27.27	16.67	18.18	27.27	9.09	16.67	.00	33.33
Both	50.00	36.36	50.00	54.54	45.45	54.54	83.33	100.00	50.00

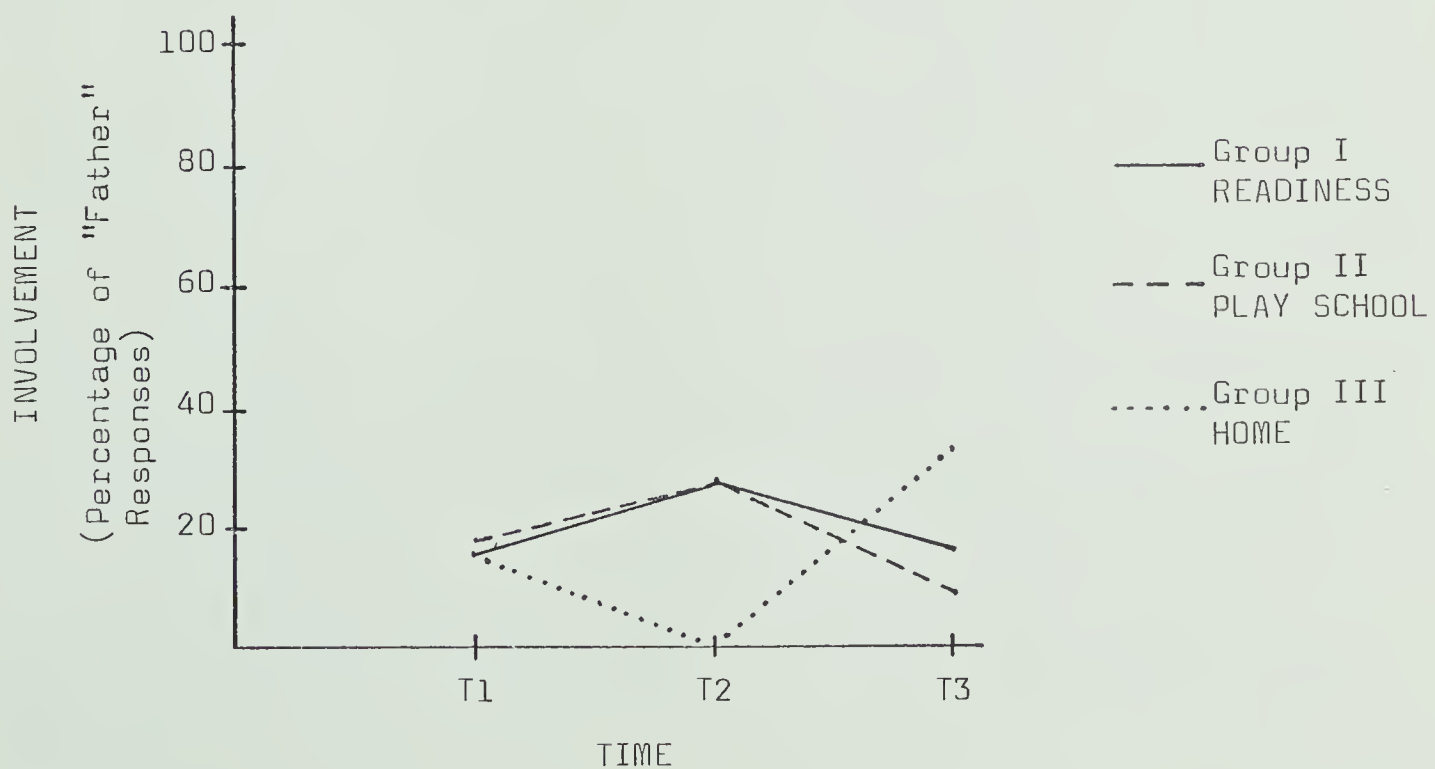
GRAPH VIII-1

MAJOR PARENTAL DECISIONS ABOUT THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN



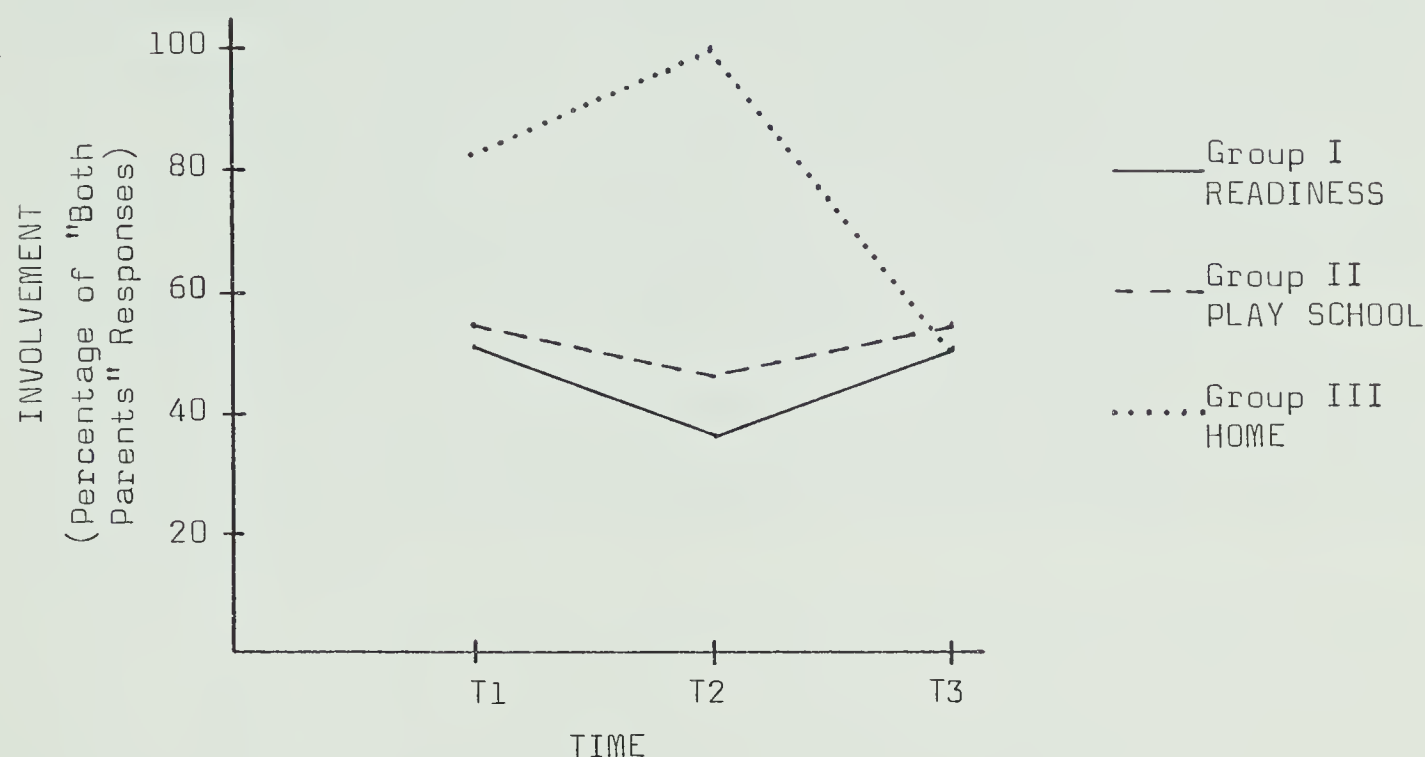
GRAPH VIII-2

MAJOR PARENTAL DECISIONS ABOUT THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN



GRAPH VIII-3

MAJOR PARENTAL DECISIONS ABOUT THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN



There was little variation in the extent to which mothers were involved in making major decisions about the care of the child other than some increase in involvement in the Play School and Home groups after treatment. The father's involvement in making such decisions varied somewhat more with the Readiness and Play School groups gradually increasing to the end of treatment and then dropping off. The control group's involvement dropped to begin with but increased markedly by the final interviews. There was considerable variation in the involvement of both parents with a moderate decrease - increase pattern in both treatment groups and an increase followed with a marked decrease in the control group. Here the variation in the control group was the greatest.

Discussion:

The extent to which the "mother" is involved in making major decisions about the care and management of her child was not markedly influenced. It is possible that the increases in involvement in Play School and Home groups following treatment reflect an assumption of a greater share of responsibility on the part of mothers following their Play School experiences with their children and the stimulation provided the Home group mothers by the interview experience. Mothers were interviewed more often than fathers in all the groups and this may be pertinent here.

The variation in the involvement of "father" and "both" parents is not clear but there is evidence of program dependency. It could be speculated that the marked increase in the involvement of "both" parents in the control group to the intermediate interviews may be due to these parents viewing the interview at first as thought provoking and instructional and then perhaps as a function of not having received any other benefits or contacts regarding their child reverting back to former decision making arrangements.

IX. Turmoil between children and siblings

Findings:

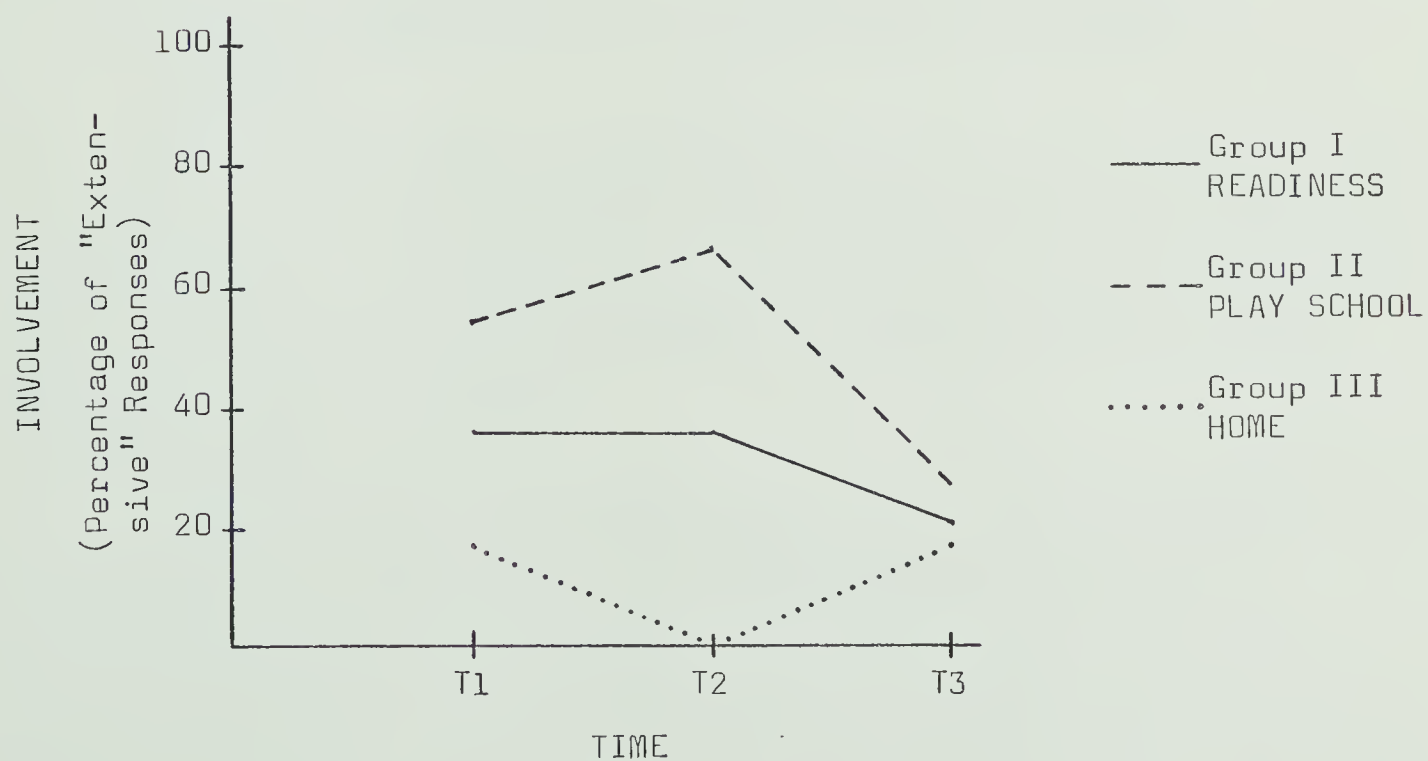
Parents were asked: (1) How do your child and his/her brothers or sisters get along now? (2) How bad does a quarrel have to be before you do something about it? Their responses appear in Table IX.

There was a moderate degree of variation in all groups with the Play School and control groups showing the greatest change in relation to turmoil between siblings. In the Readiness group turmoil remained

TABLE IX
TURMOIL BETWEEN CHILDREN AND SIBLINGS

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-14	N-14	N-14	N-11	N-9	N-11	N-6	N-5	N-6
Extensive	35.71	35.71	21.43	54.54	66.67	27.27	16.67	.00	16.67
Normal	50.00	7.14	64.29	36.36	22.22	45.45	16.67	.00	.00
Lacking	14.29	57.14	14.29	9.09	11.11	27.27	66.67	100.00	83.33

GRAPH IX
TURMOIL BETWEEN CHILDREN AND SIBLINGS



constant to the end of the treatment and dropped off during the children's first year in school while the Play School group showed a moderate increase and then a drop off. The control group's turmoil decreased initially and then increased. Differences between groups were greatest at the time of the intermediate interviews and least a year later.

Discussion:

The drop in "extensive" turmoil between siblings in the Readiness and Play School groups suggests that increased maturity and ability to relate may be associated with these programs. These may be accompanied by a possible "vertical diffusion" to their siblings (Gray and Klaus, 1970). The variation in the Home group cannot be accounted for. The end regression toward a mean may suggest that turmoil between siblings may "even out" as children grow older regardless of other effects.

X. Children's growth since the beginning of the program

Findings:

Parents were asked: (1) Does your child do any more things like acting grown up? (2) What have you seen him do? (3) Does he/she ever try to make family decisions or would you rather he didn't? Their responses appear in Table X.

Parents in all three groups observed an increase in growth in their children at the time of the intermediate interviews and a decrease thereafter. The Readiness and control groups showed the greatest variation. The variation followed a similar pattern when both the complete and incomplete sets of responses were considered.

TABLE X-1

CHILDREN'S GROWTH SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-14	N-14	N-13	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-6	N-6	N-6
Yes	64.29	85.72	69.23	58.33	66.67	58.33	33.33	66.67	50.00
No	35.71	14.29	22.87	41.67	16.67	33.33	66.67	33.33	33.33
Same	.00	.00	7.72	.00	16.67	8.33	.00	.00	16.67

GRAPH X-1

CHILDREN'S GROWTH SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM

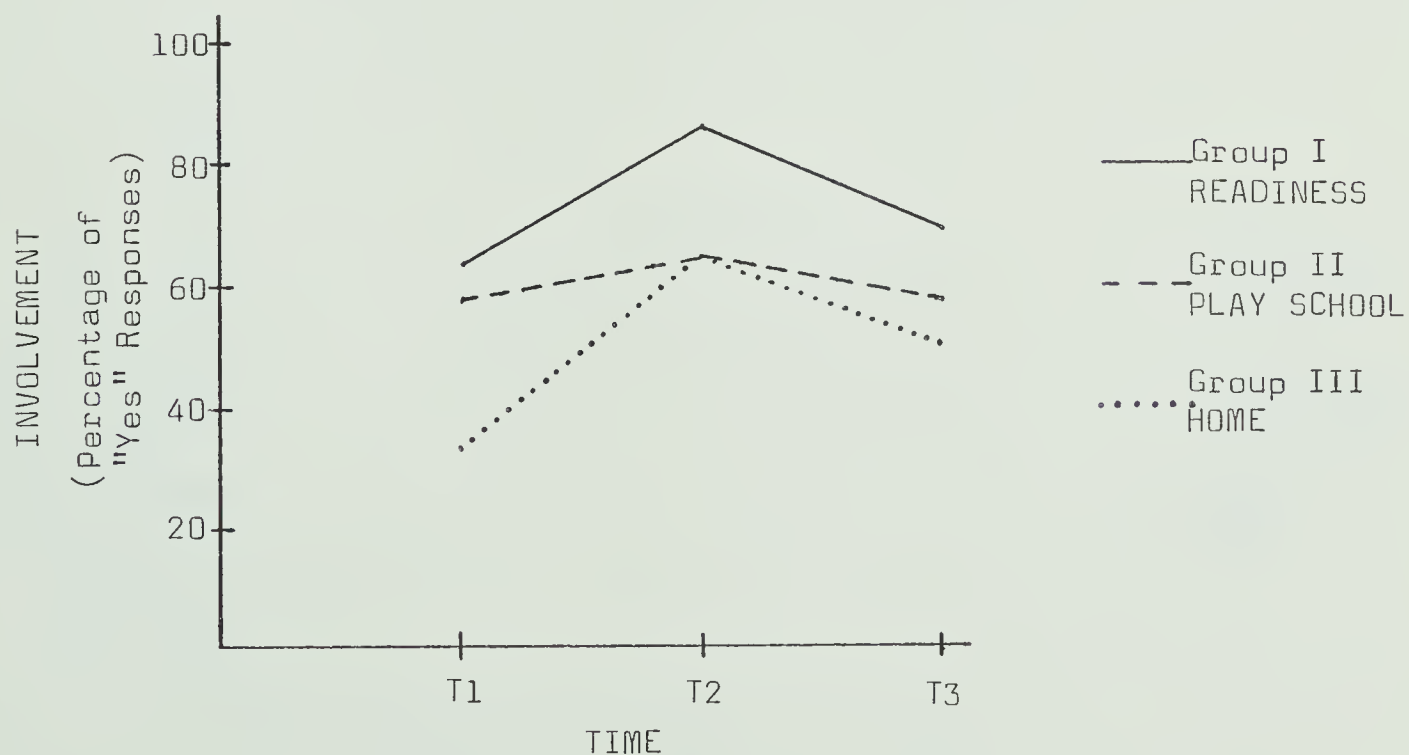


TABLE X-2

CHILDREN'S GROWTH SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM

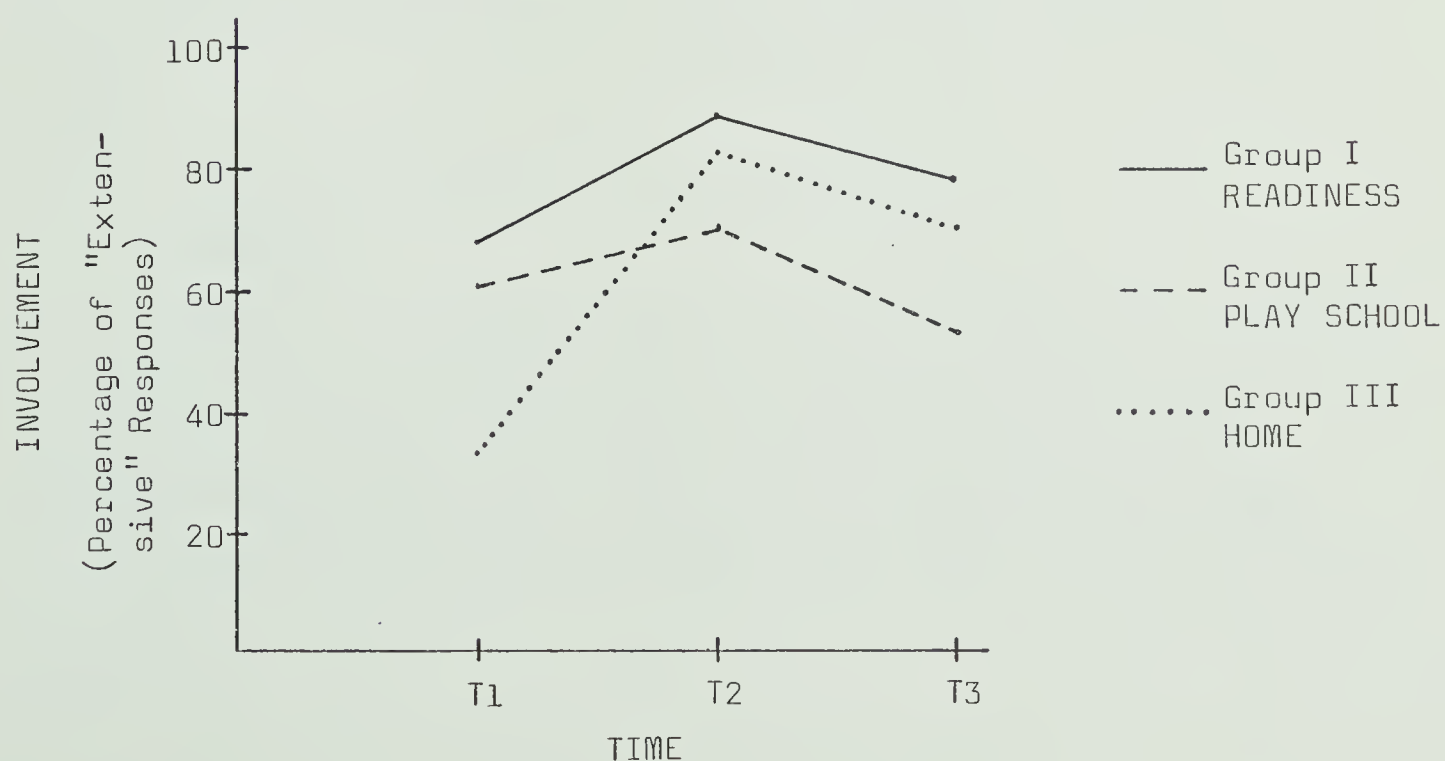
Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-16	N-18	N-18	N-13	N-17	N-15	N-6	N-18	N-10
Yes	68.75	88.89	77.78	61.54	70.59	53.33	33.33	83.33	70.00
No	31.25	11.11	16.67	38.46	17.65	33.33	66.67	16.67	20.00
Same	.00	.00	5.56	.00	11.77	13.33	.00	.00	10.00

GRAPH X-2

CHILDREN'S GROWTH SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM

Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses



Discussion:

Bishop (1969) found that the children who had attended Play School grew the least physically and those who stayed home grew a little more leaving those children who had the Readiness experience in the middle.

Parents have often shown approval for preschool programs rating them "high in helping their children get ready for school" (Montey, 1966). Parents' expectations of Head Start programs have not always been the same. Some have seen their children's growth in terms of their interest in new things or in their acquisition of social skills and so on. The growth perceived by the parents in this study may simply be a function of physical growth and physical activities. The findings suggest variation in the parents' perception of growth even though this is not identical to actual physical growth. A comparison of these findings with the variation noted when both the complete and incomplete sets of data are considered supports some degree of conformity between the growth observed and the physical growth which took place.

XI. Communication between parents and children

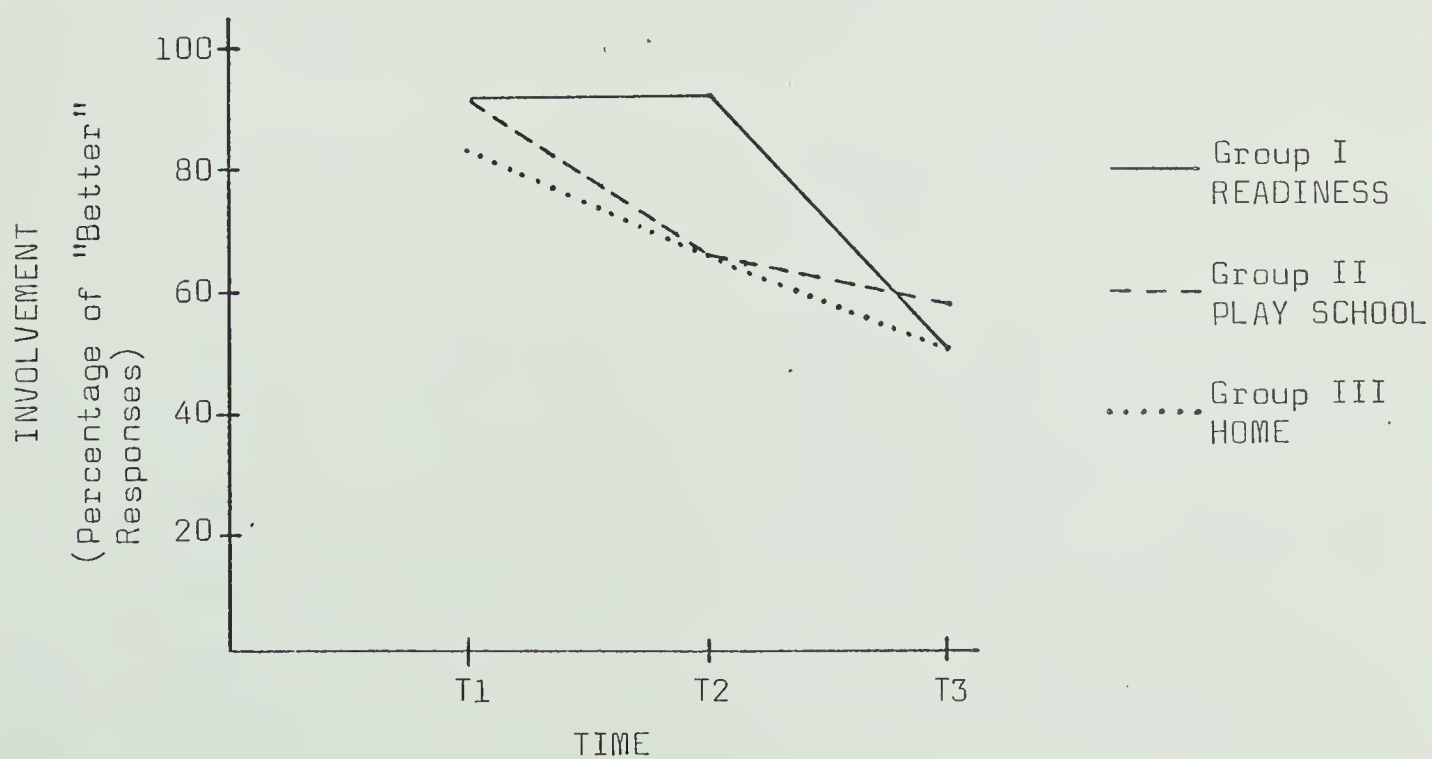
Findings:

Parents were asked: (1) Is it now easy (or) easier to talk to your child? (2) Does he/she ask questions? (3) What kinds of questions does he/she ask? (4) How do you usually answer these? (5) How much do you think she understands? Their responses appear in Table XI.

TABLE XI
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-13	N-14	N-14	N-12	N-12	N-12	N-6	N-6	N-6
Better	92.31	92.86	50.00	91.63	66.67	58.33	83.33	66.67	50.00
Worse	.00	.00	28.57	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Same	7.62	8.33	21.43	8.33	33.33	41.67	16.67	33.33	50.00

GRAPH XI
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN



The Readiness group reported little change in communication immediately following the program and a drop thereafter. Communication in the Play School and control groups decreased throughout.

Discussion:

The marked differences in the variation of the Readiness and control groups suggest the possibility of program dependence. The variation in the Readiness group suggests that the Readiness experience maintained communication between parents and children over the other two experiences as indicated by the parents' perception of this change. During the period from the intermediate to the final interviews the responses of the three groups became more alike. This change may be a function of the way the communication between the parent and child is perceived at different times. Initially communication may be viewed with special optimism or in terms of what is deemed to be socially desirable. Later this view of parent-child communication may be tempered with realism and more willingness to accept the child where he is.

XII. Children's role in establishing rules for themselves

Findings:

Parents were asked: (1) We would like to get some idea of the sort of rules you have for your child in general, the sort of thing he/she is allowed to do and the sort of things he/she isn't allowed to do? (2) What are some of the rules? (3) How about bedtime? (4) How about making noise in the house? (5) How about the amount of time he/she can spend listening to the radio or watching television programs? (6) How far away is he allowed to go by himself? (7) How about not going on the

street? (8) Any other rules? (9) Do you think children should have a voice in making rules? Their responses appear in Table XII.

TABLE XII-1

CHILDREN'S ROLE IN ESTABLISHING RULES FOR THEMSELVES

RATINGS	GROUP I			GROUP II			GROUP III		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
	N-8	N-13	N-13	N-12	N-10	N-11	N-6	N-5	N-6
Specified rules (involved child)	50.00	38.46	53.85	16.67	80.00	63.64	33.33	80.00	66.67
Specified rules (child not involved)	50.00	61.54	45.72	83.33	20.00	36.36	66.67	20.00	33.33
No rules specified	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00

The children's role in establishing rules in the Readiness group first decreased and then increased. In the Play School and control groups there was a marked increase between the initial and intermediate interviews after which there was a moderate decrease in both groups. The responses from both the complete and incomplete sets of interviews varied in a similar manner except for the control group which showed a more persistent increase.

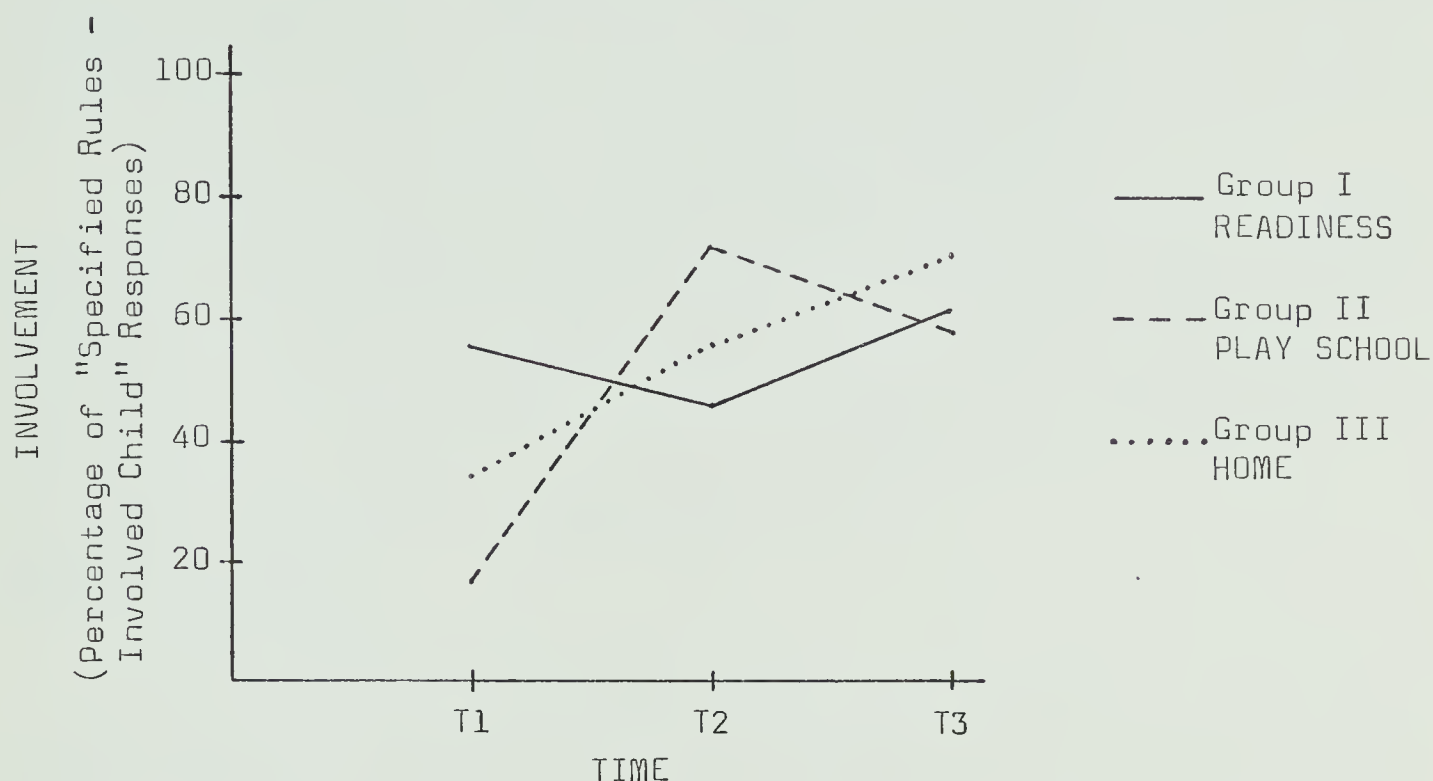
Discussion:

It has been noted that Head Start mothers have been found to stress obedience and compliance to authority in order to get an

GRAPH XII-2

CHILDREN'S ROLE IN ESTABLISHING RULES FOR THEMSELVES

Complete and Incomplete Sets of Responses



education more than did middle class mothers (Siegel, 1967). Although the families in this study were selected on the basis of low probability for success in school of their children, it is believed that these families differ from most of the families that have been served by Head Start programs. Even after rejecting from consideration for this study parents whose gross income exceeded \$7,000.00 per year, parents who attended or were attending university, and families who had two more rooms than the number of persons living in the dwelling (those with any two of these conditions), the families in this study are still some distance from the disadvantaged circumstances towards which most Head Start programs have been directed.

Although the greatest variation on this dimension occurred in the Play School group, the increased role of children in the Readiness

group in establishing rules following the program may reflect an intellectual tie to the program. The Play School and Home experiences seem to influence the children's involvement in establishing rules more markedly between the initial and intermediate interviews than do the more cognitive activities of the Readiness experience.

When both the complete and incomplete sets of data were considered, persistent upward movement was observed in the responses of the Home group parents. It could be speculated that the interviews with the Home group parents may have had a bearing on their children's increased involvement in establishing rules.

Synopsis of Results

The research procedure employed has produced much evidence of program dependence although substantial changes have not been discernible. The Readiness and Home (control) groups of parents varied the most and these were the extremes. There have been some changes in the dimensions studied worth noting. Looking over all the responses to the questions employed, it is clear that the Readiness group varied more than the Play School or Home groups.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND ADDENDUM

Summary

The main purpose of this investigation was to evaluate the effectiveness of specific preschool programs as means of intervention in home learning environments. An assessment procedure was devised building on the initial follow-up instrument employed in the Preschool Demonstration Project.

To achieve this purpose twelve variables relating to parent involvement were selected and hypotheses formed as to their expected variation. Changes in these dimensions were anticipated as a function of increased parental involvement through the direct or indirect stimulation provided by their child attending a Readiness or Play School preschool experience. A third group acted as a control.

Procedural effectiveness was assessed by means of an interview-questionnaire. This instrument was administered to the three groups of parents as an initial, intermediate and final assessment procedure. Parents were asked questions believed to be pertinent to the various dimensions of parent involvement studied. Their responses were analyzed by means of three ordinal ratings and conversion of these to percentages. Over-all variation, changes in treatment groups versus control, and specific fluctuations within groups permitted speculations as to their significance.

In brief, the findings offered little assistance in validating the dimensions put forth.

Addendum

1. The lack of significance in the trends noted in this study may well be a reflection of the extent to which provisions were made to stimulate parent involvement with their children.

2. The absorbing occupation and emotional commitment of parents to themselves and their children as learners referred to as parent involvement may not be adequately conceptualized in this study. Changes in parents' self, interactions, and their willingness to allow their children autonomy may be too complex to all be examined under one heading. Efforts of mothers directed towards self-enhancement through reading or varying leisure activities may be influenced quite differently than changes in fathers' involvement with their children. Indeed the selective representation of the twelve variables studied may have left out or errored in the inclusion of variables believed to be most influenced as a direct or indirect result of preschool programs.

3. Developing children and growing parents are most likely to vary uniquely not only in what they learn but in where and how they show what they have learned. Some of the differences within the groups studied may have been so great that they obscured some of the variation between groups. For example, the goals for one mother in one group may have been much different than the goals of another mother in the same group. Such differences within groups may result from parents being administered the same interview instrument on more than one occasion. There is evidence, especially from the control group that learning did occur when parents viewed the questions as instructional. This kind of stimulation would probably cause a jostling of parents' ideas about

themselves and their children. On the other hand repetitions of series of questions intended to seek out relevant information may by being inapplicable or impersonal in some instances cause enough boredom or disinterest in the proceedings to flatten parent responses causing a loss of evidence of true variation. To illustrate this effect one need only consider the irrelevancy and frustration introduced by questions relating to children's and parent's reading to the casual or non-reader. With some parents an interview-questionnaire is incapable of getting beyond socially acceptable responses and sometimes people are incapable of reporting accurately on personal behavior.

4. Sometimes information is lost through categorical responses to questions rather than careful explanations and through repetitions of examples rather than fresh carefully thought through illustrations. Interviewer rapport is crucial to the accuracy and extent to which respondents are able to truly share of themselves. It is quite possible that the kinds of short contacts with interviewers afforded the parents in this study may never allow parents to truly reveal themselves.

5. The lack of clarity in the directionality of the treatment changes in this study has posed some perplexity to the study. What took place between the staff and parents? Were future goals discussed? What reference was made to discipline and rules for children? Were attempts made to influence children's exposure to literature? Was the importance of parent self-enhancement made clear?

6. "It is critical that the effects of preschool programming be observable several years after the experience and that they be

measured by instruments that are at least systematic if not standardized" (Weikart, 1969). It may, however, be too much to expect that a single preschool experience, of whatever length, affect the course of all future parent child involvement.

7. The study of the sort reported here is somewhat diffuse and inconclusive for many reasons, not the least of which were the very small samples available. As it appears that in most cases the gains which children make in the preschool are "washed out" or disappear as the child moves through the public school, it is also possible that the gains made in parent involvement are also "washed out". There is a pressing need to sustain the gains made either through making public education better or through developing sustaining agent(s) in children's lives. More direct forms of intervention in home environments causing changes in parents' (particularly mothers') perceptions of themselves and their children accompanying preschool programs may assure the longevity of treatment effects.

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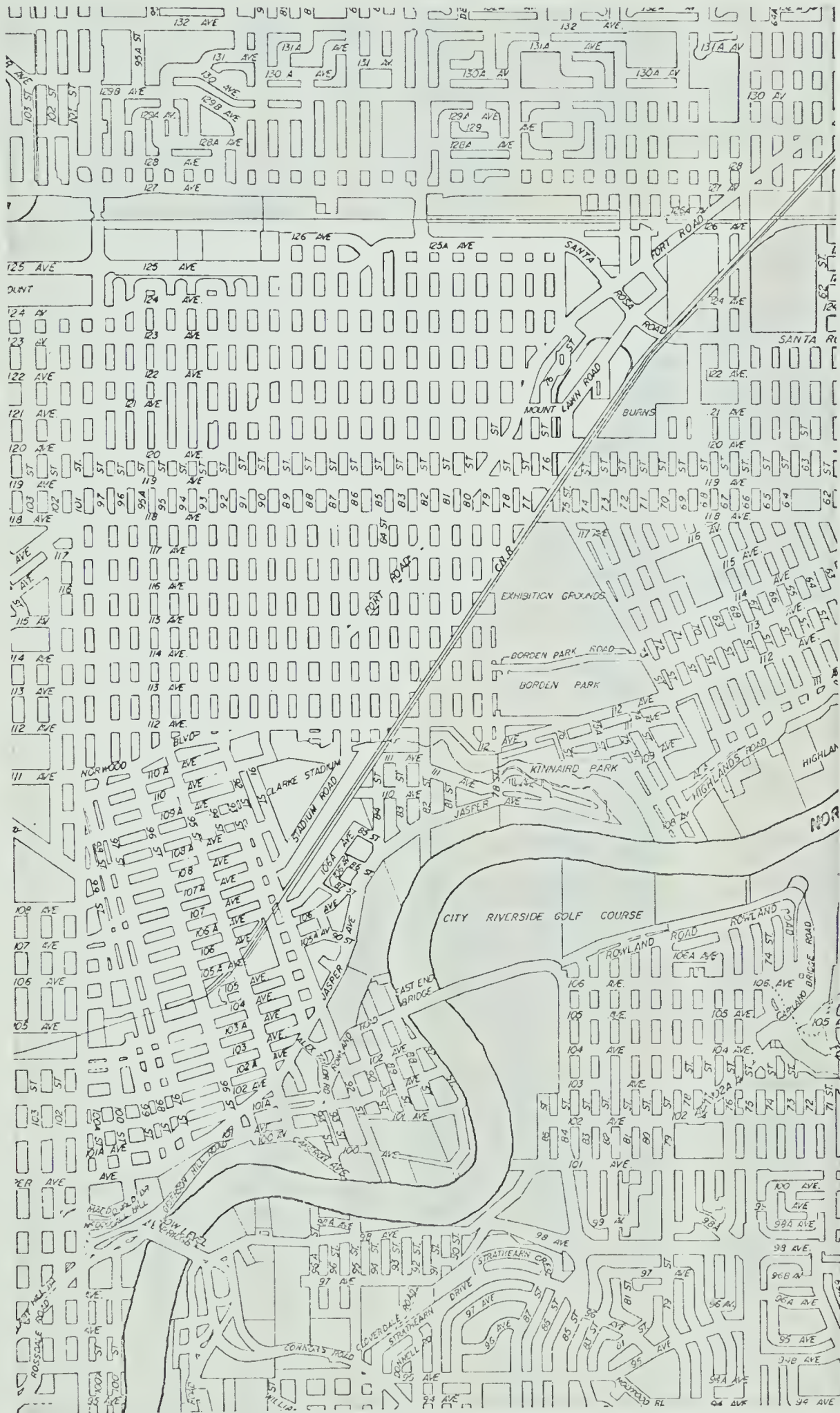
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



STUDY BOUNDARIES IN CENTRAL EDMONTON

APPENDIX B

PARENT CONFERENCE AND INTERVIEW PRE-SCHOOL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

June 1968

1. Have you given any more thought as to how much education you would like your child to have?
 - (a) Finish high school?
 - (b) Technical school?
 - (c) College?
 - (d) Would you like your child to go beyond college: for example, to attend grad school or obtain a specialist's degree in law or medicine?
2. If it should turn out that your child for one reason or another is unable to obtain as much education as you would like, how would you think you would react? Would you be very disappointed? Would you accept the situation and not let it bother you?
 - (a) How would you feel if your child dropped out of high school? Would you let him make his decision on this?
 - (b) What plans have you made to finance your child's education?
3. What are you reading these days?
 - (a) Are you subscribing to any new magazines?
 - (b) Which ones?
 - (c) How many books have you read since we last talked?
 - (d) Has there been any change in the kinds of books that you like to read?
 - (e) Since your child has been involved in our pre-school project have you been doing any more reading to him (her)?
 - (f) Does X have any new books?
 - (g) Have you subscribed to any children's magazines?
 - (h) Have you changed or do you belong to any new social groups such as curling or bowling clubs?
 - (i) How much time of the day do you spend watching television?
4. How is your husband now involved with the care, play and discipline of X?
 - (a) What kinds of things do they do together?
 - (b) Does your husband take care of X?
 - (c) How about helping him get dressed, getting his meals, and taking him to school?
5. How would you say you and your husband agree about the best way to handle X?
 - (a) Does he ever think you are too strict or not strict enough?
 - (b) Can you give an example of a case where you didn't agree entirely?
6. Who now seems to be making the main decisions about the child?
 - (a) For instance, in deciding how far X is allowed to go by himself?
 - (b) About such health matters as calling the doctor or keeping him indoors for the day? Who decides that?
7. How does X and his brother or sister get along now?
 - (a) How bad does a quarrel have to get before you do something about it?
 - (b) How do you handle it when children quarrel? Give me an example.
 - (c) How about when things are going smoothly among all the children, do you do anything to show them that you have noticed this?
 - (d) If yes, what sort of things would you do?
8. Does he do more things like acting grown up?
 - (a) What have you seen him do?
 - (b) Does he ever try to make family decisions or would you rather he didn't?

9. How much attention does your child want from you now as compared with the last time we talked?
 - (a) Does he seem to want more when he has done something wrong?
 - (b) How would you feel about giving it to him then?
 - (c) How do you generally react if he demands attention when you're busy?
 - (d) Does he seem to need to be with you most of the time or does he get along without you pretty well?
 - (e) How does he react when you have to be away?
10. Is it now easier for you to talk with him?
 - (a) Does he ask questions?
 - (b) What kinds of questions does he ask?
 - (c) How do you usually answer these?
 - (d) How much do you think he understands?
11. What do you think are the best ways of disciplining children?
 - (a) When your child has to be disciplined, who usually does it, you or your husband? (Husband, assuming both are there.)
 - (b) Does your child have any regular jobs outside the home which he is supposed to do?
 - (c) Are there some things around the house he is expected to take responsibility for?
 - (d) How is he about this?
12. What are the things that X does that bother you particularly.
13. How important do you think it is for him to be careful about marking on walls, jumping on furniture and things like that?
 - (a) What do you do if he does these things?
14. We'd like to get some ideas of the sort of rules you have for X in general; the sort of thing he is allowed to do and the sort of things he isn't allowed to do.
 - (a) What are some of the rules?
 - (b) How about bedtime?
 - (c) How about making noise in the house?
 - (d) How about the amount of time he can spend listening to the radio or watching T.V. programs?
 - (e) How far away he is allowed to go by himself?
 - (f) How about not going on the street?
 - (g) Any other rules?
 - (h) Do you think children should have a voice in making rules?
15. Let's have another look at the way in which your life goes.
 - (a) How do you usually spend your week?
 - (b) What do you find time to do besides taking care of the children?
 - (c) What part of your day is most difficult for you?
 - (d) What is most pleasant?
 - (e) Can you describe how the typical day might go for X?
 - (f) Can you tell me about yesterday?
 - (g) Did you have to discipline X yesterday?
 - (h) Did you and X spend some time playing together?
 - (i) Did you read to him or tell him a story?
 - (j) Did you encourage X to tell you about something he had discovered while he was playing or tell you about what he had done while he was at play? (or at the pre-school program)?
16. Did you point out to X something that he hadn't noticed before or did you try to teach him something new?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW-QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Have you given any more thought as to how much education you would like your child to have?

- Finish high school?
- Technical school?
- College?

Would you like your child to go beyond college, for example, to attend graduate school or obtain a specialist's degree in law or medicine?

II. If it should turn out that your child for one reason or another is unable to obtain as much education as you would like, how would you think you would react, would you be very disappointed?

- Would you accept the situation and not let it bother you?
- How would you feel if your child dropped out of high school?
- Would you let him/her make his decision on this?

What plans have you made to finance your child's education?

III. What are you reading these days?

- Are you subscribing to any new magazines?
- Which ones?
- How many books have you read since we last talked?
- Has there been any change in the kinds of books that you like to read?

IV. Since your child has been involved in our preschool project have you been doing any more reading to him/her?

- Does your child have any new books?
- Have you subscribed to any children's magazines?

V. Have you changed or do you belong to any new social groups such as curling or bowling clubs?

How much time of the day do you spend watching television?

VI. How is your husband now involved with the care, play and discipline of your child?

- What kinds of things do they do together.
- Does your husband take care of him/her?
- How about helping him/her get dressed, getting his meals, and taking him to school?

VII. How would you say you and your husband agree about the best way to handle your child?

- Does he/she ever think you are too strict or not strict enough?
- Can you give an example of a case where you didn't agree entirely?

VIII. Who now seems to be making the main decisions about the child?

- For instance, in deciding how far he/she is allowed to go by himself?
- About such health matters as calling the doctor or keeping him indoors for the day? Who decides that?

IX. How does he/she and his/her brother or sister get along?

- How bad does a quarrel have to get before you do something about it?

X. Does he/she do any more things like acting grown up?

- What have you seen him/her do?

Does he/she ever try to make family decisions or would you rather he didn't?

XI. Is it now easier for you to talk to him?

- Does he/she ask questions?
- What kinds of questions does he/she ask?
- How do you usually answer these?
- How much do you think he/she understands?

XII. We'd like to get some idea of the sort of rules you have for your child in general, the sort of thing he is allowed to do and the sort of things he isn't allowed to do.

- What are some of the rules?
- How about bedtime?
- How about making noise in the house?
- How about the amount of time he/she can spend listening to the radio or watching T.V. programs?
- How far away he/she is allowed to go by himself?
- How about not going on the street?
- Any other rules?

Do you think children should have a voice in making rules?

APPENDIX D

RATING SCALES

For each of the twelve dimensions of involvement three ordinal ratings have been made progressing from the highest or most to the lowest or least.

I. Educational Goals of Parent for Child

- (i) "Well defined" educational goals were indicated by the parent's desire for the child to progress as far as possible or at least as far as desired.
- (ii) Parents with "limited" goals for their child's education hoped that their child would get a "good education", perhaps high school and a trade or a special course or some such equivalent.
- (iii) Goals were considered to be "lacking" when parents strictly preferred to see what was desired by their child.

II. Educational Plans of Parent for Child

- (i) Educational plans for a child were considered "well defined" if a parent indicated that there would be definite disappointment should the child not reach the predetermined level of education, the child would not be allowed to make the decision to drop out of high school on his own, and plans regarding the financing of higher education were being made by way of bonds, insurance or some other specific savings. Although all these criteria

were not always present at the same time, well established plans included at least two such indications.

- (ii) "Limited plans" were those which still involved substantial disappointment should the child not reach the desired level of education, trying to encourage the child to stay in school but essentially saying it is the child's own decision, and indicating that finances will take care of themselves when the time comes.
- (iii) A total "lack" of plans was indicated by little to moderate disappointment should the child not reach a specified level of education, dropping out of school being totally the child's decision, and no thought given to finances.

III. Mother's Reading and Exposure to Literature

- (i) A mother's exposure to literature was rated as being "extensive" when she was able to give examples of new magazines being subscribed to and/or examples of a considerable number of books read, with some or at least a minimal change in the kinds of reading preferred.
- (ii) "Limited" exposure to literature was suggested by an example(s) of a new magazine(s) or of a book(s) read with no change in the kind of reading.
- (iii) "No exposure" to literature implied absolutely no reading.

IV. Child's Exposure to Literature at Home

- (i) "Extensive exposure" of a child to literature at home meant that his/her parent(s) were reading to him/her more

or at least the same amount and that he/she had some to many new books and some to no subscriptions to children's magazines.

V. Mother's Time for Leisure Activities

- (i) A mother's time for leisure activities was rated as "extensive" when she attended one or more new social groups or watched many hours of television or a combination of both.
- (ii) Her time for leisure was thought of as "limited" if she attended one or no social groups and watched only a few hours of television per day (four or less hours).
- (iii) No social groups and no television were considered to indicate "no leisure".

VI. Father's Involvement with Child

- (i) A father's involvement with the child was considered "extensive" if several examples of activities that were done together were given, if some time was spent in caring for the child (suggestive of both a willingness and the ability to do so), and there was some participation in dressing, meals or taking the child to school.
- (ii) "Limited" involvement was indicated by a few examples of mutual activities, some to no time spent in caring for the child, and some to no part in dressing, meals, or taking the child to school.
- (iii) "Lacking" any involvement was suggested by minimal mutual activity, minimal to no time spent caring for the child,

and no participation in dressing, meals or transportation.

VII. Parental Agreement on Discipline

- (i) Parental "agreement" or "disagreement" on discipline was ascertained from the parent's assessment of the extent to which they agreed on the best way to handle their child. Verification was provided by impressions of whether the respondent felt that the father thought of the mother as being too strict or not strict enough and by an example of incomplete agreement.
- (ii) The "undecided" rating included responses which indicated uncertainty.

VIII. Major Parental Decisions About the Care and Management of Child

- (i) The major parental decisions about the care and management of the child were rated in accordance with who made them -- "mother", "father", or "both". Verification of the direct response to this question was provided by additional questioning regarding decisions about health concerns and the distance the child was allowed to go by himself.

IX. Turmoil Between Child and Siblings

- (i) "Extensive" turmoil between child and siblings was indicated when there were reports of considerable quarreling with the suggestion that the quarrel often became serious.
- (ii) "Normal" turmoil was thought to exist when siblings got along well but with some fighting which either resolved itself or was stopped.

- (iii) Turmoil "lacking" applied to situations where siblings got along very well with just periodic quarrels which generally ended or were stopped quickly and easily.

X. Child's Growth Since the Beginning of the Program

- (i) The child's growth was rated "yes" if his behavior appeared to the respondent to be grown up or more grown up and was verified by examples. The child was often attempting to or was already participating in family decisions.
- (ii) Little, periodic or no indication of the child's behavior appearing to be grown up or more grown up with little or no attempt by the child to participate in family decisions was rated "no" growth.

XI. Communication Between Parent and Child

- (i) Communication between parent and child was rated as "better" if a parent indicated that it was easy (or) easier to talk with his/her child. Examples of the child's questions were usually given with an indication of honest and conscientious efforts on the part of the parent to reply to them in a manner that much of what was conveyed was understood.
- (ii) Communication was rated the "same" when a parent reported that it was as it had always been or no easier to talk to his/her child. This usually meant that the child had always asked questions and that the parents' answers were generally quite well understood.

- (iii) Communication was rated as "worse" if there was a definite indication that the parent felt it was difficult (or) more difficult to talk with his/her child.

XII. Child's Role in Establishing Rules for Himself

- (i) "Specified rules -- child involved" required a definite indication of rules for the child be given and that the parent(s) believed that a child should have some voice in making rules.
- (ii) "Specified rules -- child not involved" required a definite indication of rules for the child be given and that the parent(s) believed a child should not have a voice in making rules.
- (iii) "None" meant that no rules were specified.

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO PARENTS IN PRESCHOOL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

(date)

Dear _____:

Another school year has passed and your child is now in (his or her) second year in school. As you remember from our talks in the past, we would be contacting you from time to time to see how (child's name) was doing at home and in school.

Last spring we scheduled talks with all teachers of children in the preschool demonstration project. We probably spoke with (child's name in possessive form) first year teacher. Now we wish to interview parents. If possible, we will arrange to have the same person call on you again. The interview will be like the ones that you had toward the end of 1967 and in June of 1968.

By keeping in touch with parents of children who were involved in our preschool education study, we hope to provide valuable information to parents and school people.

In a short while, you will be contacted by telephone in order to confirm your continued interest in the project and willingness to talk with us again. At this time we can decide upon an interview time.

Thank you for your help in the past -- we look forward to working with you again.

Very sincerely,

J. K. Bishop
University Representative
Preschool Demonstration Project
(Edmonton Readiness Centre)

P.S.

Should your address and/or telephone number be changed since June 1968, please notify Mrs. Stocco at 432-3746.

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